

THE BETTER HOME

JULY • AUGUST • SEPTEMBER • 1945
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION SERIES

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For





Go ye

into all the world, which begins in your living room, your bedroom, or even your kitchen. And whom will you find there? The people whom you know best—your family and especially your children.

and teach all . . .

from the youngest to the oldest. They love you, believe in you, and follow your leadership. You can find your supreme joy in telling them of Jesus your Saviour, leading them to trust him for themselves, and encouraging them as they set out to live each day in fellowship with him. Parents, you crave every worthwhile advantage for your children—be the first to introduce them to God.

The Centennial Evangelistic Crusade Begins at Home

The Better HOME

VOL. II JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1945 NO. III

HOWARD M. REAVES, EDITOR

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

Contents

	PAGE
For Your General Reading	
Editorially Speaking (Two GUEST EDITORIALS)	2
<i>J. H. Montgomery</i> <i>George Waller Fiske</i>	
The Bible and My Bibles	3
<i>Mary Frances Johnson Preston</i>	
Actions Speak Louder	5
<i>Marie Butler Coffey</i>	
Legacy (A Trilogy of Poems)	7
<i>Anne Robinson</i> <i>Ramona G. Yarmy</i> <i>Lucille S. Jackson</i>	
"Let's Go to My House"	8
<i>Marine S. Morgan</i>	
The American Pattern	10
<i>Mabel Thompson Rauch</i>	
Prayer and the Green Linen Suit	12
<i>Frances Fowler Allen</i>	

For Your Daily Devotions

ALTAR FIRES, "Studies in Genesis"	13
<i>W. Clyde Atkins</i>	

Comments

"The Bible and My Bibles" reveals a deep appreciation of the Bible in its many versions and editions.

"Actions Speak Louder" shows how the examples of parents may lead their children to become honest or dishonest.

"Let's Go to My House" calls the attention of parents to ways of making the home attractive so that boys and girls will not want to go elsewhere for their recreation.

"The American Pattern" reveals how much the opportunity of worship meant in pioneer days and should mean today.

"Prayer and the Green Linen Suit" deals with the problem of the wandering mind and shows how prayer can become a vital experience.

The devotional section, "Altar Fires," was written by Rev. W. Clyde Atkins, pastor of the Eutaw Place Baptist Church, Baltimore, Maryland.

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Editorially Speaking

The Home a Cooperative Enterprise

Business men in cooperative enterprises are willing to share opinions and accept suggestions. If men and women can discipline themselves thus in business for the sake of profits, they should also be able to do it in the home for the sake of individual and group development. The autocrat is unpopular today, whether in politics, government, business, or in the home. The development of individuals is hindered when one person in the group undertakes to direct that group in keeping with his own wishes. The home is a place to develop character, initiative, unselfishness, and ability to cooperate successfully. Parents who rule without even seeking to know the wishes of other members of the household will have children who may be so domineering that they can succeed only when they have their own way or who may be so dependent that they become weaklings in society.

A plan of sharing can be arranged in keeping with the needs of the individuals in the home, so that even young children can understand that they are participating. As soon as they are able to comprehend, children should be taken into the family council for a discussion of a budget and helped to know how to distribute fairly the common fund. . . . Only those who grow up in homes where a wise democratic procedure is followed are safe in the exercise of larger democratic duties.—J. H. MONTGOMERY, *Christian Parenthood in a Changing World*, p. 31.

Insurance Against Broken Homes

Without doubt the best insurance against broken homes is *family religion*. The only way to stop the trend toward pagan, self-indulgent homes is to keep our Christian families loyal to the spirit and ideals of Jesus. Only religion furnishes a strong, enduring basis of ethics in the very character of God. It supplies the noblest ideals as standards of conduct; and it also injects the spiritual motive power to realize these ideals and to put them into life. This spiritual power in religion, which no other human experience can furnish, comes from a vital relation with God. It is no empty phrase to say that the Christian family depends on God's help for its stability, its continuance, as well as its happiness. The tests of patience, mutual forbearance, and love in the family relationships are many and varied; but the Master has reduced every domestic emergency to the uniform challenge of the Golden Rule. As long as our genuine love keeps us considerate of others, so that we do not fail to treat others in the home as we ourselves would be treated, so long the family craft with its precious freight rides the storm.—GEORGE WALTER FISKE, *A Study of Jesus' Own Religion*, p. 244.

Positive and constructive thinking in regard to ways of strengthening the home is evidenced in this issue's guest editorials, and we commend them to you for your careful study and appraisal. Permission to quote these passages was graciously granted by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press and The Macmillan Company respectively.

Howard M. Reeves



THE BIBLE

and My Bibles

MARY FRANCES JOHNSON PRESTON

The Gideons have a worthy goal of putting a Bible in every hotel room. We have, in a way, adopted the same goal for our home, for we like to keep a Bible or a Testament or some collection of Scripture in each room of the house.

Somehow using the Bible in the home becomes natural when the Book itself is a familiar sight around the house. The presence of the Book hallows any room, and the occasional uses—as well as the planned times of Bible reading, meditation, and study—are many.

And so, in our home, the Bible is available. We have a number of different versions and interesting bindings, but the "meat of the Word" is there at arm's length from almost any chair in the house.

The little olivewood Testament has a meaning all its own, since it was a gift from a college Sunday school class I enjoyed teaching. My teacher's Testament with notes stays with my Sunday school quarters and commentaries. It is getting thick now, for the notes pasted in are padding the pages. By my bed I keep a copy of the Precious Promise Testament—a gift brought to me from the Southern Baptist Convention about ten years ago. The promises are in red and stand out like mountain peaks silhouetted against the setting sun.

Perhaps the most worn Testament in our house is Helen Barrett Montgomery's Centenary translation. This was a gift at Christmas time from a very dear friend. I like this version because it is in everyday language. It is "by paragraphs" and easy to read. I like this particular book also because on the flyleaves I have some notes made from sermons I heard Dr. G. Campbell Morgan preach. I prefer to read about the people at the foot of the cross from my notes than to read the actual sermon in his

Crises of the Christ. This little book has been especially helpful with the children, for it often explains a passage of Scripture which is hard for children to grasp in the King James translation.

This leads me to say that I do not believe any version can take the place of the beautiful King James. For memory work, for beauty of style, for loftiness in thought, my choice is the King James Version. I would rather use it for general reading than any other.

Then there is the Weymouth translation. It stays on a little shelf easily accessible to all. Some think that it is in this translation that we get our nearest and best interpretation of the actual words of Jesus. This little dollar book was a gift too, and what a blessing it has been! It is especially popular with the menfolk in my home, because, as my boy explains, "It says what it means."

Goodspeed's is a translation I like and use frequently in teaching Sunday school lessons. I like the way he translates passages which are otherwise hard to interpret. For those of us who have not studied Greek and have to rely upon translators, I think his translation is wonderfully helpful. It is like reading the morning paper. When in twenty-odd brief verses he gives us the letter Paul wrote to his Christian friend Philemon it is most readable and helpful and it is easy to see three of "God's great gentlemen"—Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus—working together in brotherly love. Give me a Goodspeed when I am preparing to teach a Bible class!

Have I mentioned the little white Bible which our daughter cherishes? It was given to her the day she was born, and until she was six, it was kept clean and white in the small gift box in which it came. Occasionally I would show it to her and she would

feel it, pat it, and admire it. When she became a Primary she started taking it to Sunday school. The gift is a little worn now on the edges and there are a few torn places among the pages, but she reads it. Sometimes I come upon her reading at random. The big words she skips over unless I am near by to explain the meaning. I feel, however, that she is learning to love the Holy Book, and what does it matter if the white cover is turning gray and the leaves are somewhat wrinkled? It is becoming to her "God's Dear Book."

Our son has a cherished Authorized King James Version which he used in day school. It was the Bible from which he memorized the names of the sixty-six books—it was the Bible from which we did the Junior Union daily Bible readings. Then upon his promotion to the Junior Department his church presented him with a Revised Version. This he has nearly worn out in Sword Drills in the Training Union. We are reserving his beautiful real leather Bible with concordance, maps, and blank pages for notes for the next period of use. This came to him from a cherished friend before he was a month old. I am glad he has used the less expensive copies during his rough and tumble Junior age, for if he had not had them available the lovely Nelson Bible would already have seen its best days.

There are other copies too. In the spare room in a bookcase is a huge, old family Bible which will soon be a hundred years old. In it are the records of my husband's family—births, deaths, marriages—dating many years back. The print is large and the book must weigh fifteen pounds. It is

a tan, stiff-backed, heavy paper edition. What a treasure and benediction is this old, old volume!

I have kept my first little Testament in a keepsake box. It was a present from Santa Claus when I was eight! I have a very inexpensive small red-backed Testament—a gift of a missionary friend. It has a number in it and I feel sure that almost illegible number must have represented the number of Testaments Pearl Bigler had given away. How I have used it can only be known when I record that it has long since fallen to pieces and been glued together many, many times.

I have another Bible which has tender memories associated with it. I had bought a beautiful, medium-sized Bible with large print for my father's Christmas gift and had wrapped it with tissue and ribbon and seals. But five days before Christmas he quietly passed away. I have never had the feeling I should unwrap that package. I have hoped that somehow he knew of the gift. Perhaps someday an occasion will come which I shall deem the proper time to break the Christmas seals.

I shall mention only one other volume. It is not a complete edition. It is not always an accurate edition. There are no gilt edges or fine India paper. It is the version I keep in my heart. The many golden texts learned at Sunday school, the passages my mother taught me as a little girl, the Sermon on the Mount I once memorized when doing Baptist student work, the memory work I have learned again with my children—these are precious passages from my Bible. I shall cherish them as long as I live.

LIFE'S CADENCE

JESSIE BROWN THOMAS

God made
A child to sing;
To gaily dance and play,
And let his laughter brighten all
The day.

God made
The home for love;
A place where one may rest
Protected from the storm of life,
And blessed.

A home,
A child and love,
Gay laughter and a song,
These are the things that move the world
Along.



Actions Speak Louder

MARIE BUTLER COFFEY



Lucy Squires set the last jar of honey-colored apple jelly on the kitchen cabinet with a little sigh of sheer contentment. Ten more glasses of captured sweetness to brighten the winter days ahead! Lucy hummed a little tune as she glanced at the clock. It was time to send Bob to the store. Her grocery list would require careful planning today, for she had only a dollar and some change left for the two remaining days of the week.

She picked up her purse and shook the change, fifty-eight cents, into her hand. Frantically she searched through every nook and cranny in the house but that dollar had disappeared, as if by magic.

"Fifty-eight cents for five meals!" she thought weakly. As she dropped down at the kitchen table with the coins in her hand, she became aware suddenly of Bob and Larry out on the back porch, their shrill young voices raised in argument.

"You had no right to take money out of Mother's purse without asking," eleven-year-old Bob contended.

"It was too all right," Larry shrilled. "Didn't I have to have parts for my model plane? Anyway, Daddy earns lots of money."

"Larry, that's wrong. It's stealing!" Bob rebuked his small brother severely.

Stung to angry vociferation, Larry shouted, "It's not stealing! Any more than it was stealing for Mother and Daddy to take those apples from the farmer's tree for the jelly. They said he wouldn't miss 'em. And I guess whatever Mother and Daddy do is perfectly all right. Now I'm going out to the garage where I can have some peace!"

Lucy caught her lip between her teeth as she listened to her small son's sandals clipp-clapping down the walk. There had been an afternoon earlier in the week when John had had to drive out into the country on business and had decided to take the boys along on a last autumn picnic. Lucy had packed a basket and they had stopped to

eat where damp, rainbow-hued rocks rose precipitously to form a glen. It had been their favorite picnic spot for years.

After lunch they had all walked over to the orchard and filled the lunch hamper with luscious red apples from the heavy-hanging trees. Lucy recalled Larry's anxious question, "Doesn't the farmer care if we take these apples, Daddy?" and John's careless, "Why should he? He has plenty more."

In the privacy of their own room she told him about it immediately after dinner when the boys had gone outdoors to play.

John was appalled. "I had no idea Larry would take it like that," he declared thoughtfully.

"I know, dear," she sighed. "Well, there's just one thing to do, John. Talking wouldn't do any good. Not after we've set such a bad example. You know what we have to do?"

He looked at her levelly. "I think I do." He went out to the garage and came back with a clean wooden box. He and Lucy began packing the glasses of jelly in it, while the children watched.

"Going to carry the jelly down to the cellar, Daddy?" Larry asked idly.

"No," said John, "we're going for a ride." There was a whoop of glee from the porch.

As they drove out along the old lake road, Larry exulted, "We're going to the glen! Is it another picnic, Mother?"

"Why, sure, dopey," Bob broke in. "We're going to eat jelly. Glasses and glasses of jelly. Boy, oh, boy!"

"Um! And do I like apple jelly!" Larry added blissfully.

There was a clamor from the back seat when they whirled on past the glen, and exclamations of bewilderment when John drove into the "glen farmer's" yard. Lucy's heart was hammering but she tried to keep the thought of Larry uppermost in her mind as she straightened her backbone into a steel rod.

John drove around to the back door of the dilapidated old farmhouse and Lucy

reached for the box of jelly and stepped out of the car. She could feel the eyes of her children watching her as she picked her way cautiously around discarded toys, dry bones, a lethargic dog, and a family of kittens to the farmhouse door.

At her knock, a disheveled woman with a listless looking baby in her arms opened the door. Several other children clustered about her, staring at the strangers.

"Good evening," said Lucy. "Do you own the orchard down here near the glen?"

"Yes," said the woman.

"Well, I have a confession to make," Lucy began, color flooding her pretty face. "We had a picnic down there the other day and took some of the apples. I made this jelly—"

"I'm sure you're welcome to the apples," the woman broke in tiredly.

"No, I'm afraid not," Lucy said firmly. "You see, we *stole* those apples. I didn't stop to think until the jelly was all made. And the only thing I could do then was to bring you the jelly."

"That's nice of you but you didn't have to do that. There's your sugar and your time and all—"

"I know. That's the price I have to pay for stealing. Please take the jelly," Lucy persisted.

Tears flooded the woman's weary eyes. "If you only knew what a godsend that jelly is," she said. "My baby has been sick for weeks and I didn't think I'd get to have any apple jelly at all this year."

"Oh, I'm sorry!" Lucy touched the baby's frail hand sympathetically. "I'm glad I was able to help. I hope you enjoy the jelly."

As she went out and took her place beside John she felt uplifted, strangely free and happy. John started the car and they whirled out of the cluttered yard and down the road.

For a long moment there wasn't a sound from the back seat. Then Bob piped, "Mother, you're a—a dandy good sport!"

"Thank you, dear," Lucy faltered.

Lucy lingered in the boys' room that night, hoping that Larry had absorbed the lesson which she and John had taken such pains to teach him. But, although he seemed wrapped up in "long, long thoughts," he gave no sign, nor did he mention the pilfered dollar.

Almost reluctantly, Lucy went downstairs to John.

"Did he say anything?" John demanded at once. She shook her head morosely.

"But even if we made no impression on Larry it makes me feel quite jubilant, doesn't it you, John?" she said. He nodded and they settled down with their favorite magazines in the cheery glow of the fire and read quietly for several minutes.

"Listen," said John, looking toward the door into the hall.

Lucy heard little footsteps padding down the stairs. She clasped her hands prayerfully under her magazine.

It was Larry. He came slowly into the room, sweet and rosy in his fuzzy pajamas, and walked straight up to Lucy.

"Mother, I took a dollar out of your purse today," he said.

"I know, dear," she answered.

"And you weren't angry?"

"No, but very sorry. You should never open another person's purse unless the owner asks you to do so!"

The child's big dark eyes were bright and serious. "It was stealing, wasn't it, Mother?"

"Yes, Larry."

"But didn't we steal the apples?"

"Yes, but Daddy and I were very sorry and ashamed."

"But it's all right if you give them back, isn't it?"

"It's never all right to steal, Larry. And it isn't enough to be sorry or even to give things back. You have to promise God faithfully never to steal again—and then keep your promise."

Larry's small fist shot out. "Here. There isn't much left of the dollar. But I'll carry groceries for Mr. Morey every Saturday till I pay it all back. And I solemnly promise never to steal again."

He was indeed solemn, as he crossed his heart with a small index finger.

"That's a good boy, Larry." Lucy bent and kissed her little son's soft cheek. "Thank you."

"Thank you for being a good mother—and Daddy too," he chirped, with the air of a small woolly angel bestowing his blessing.

Lucy and John looked at each other across his bright head with lips that smiled happily, although their eyes were wet.

Legacy

ANNE ROBINSON
RAMONA G. YARMY
LUCILLE S. JACKSON

These, my children's legacy—
Strong character, integrity;
A sturdy body, healthy mind,
Tolerance of all mankind.
A valiant spirit, sound and sane,
A singing heart in sun and rain.
A great good country that will give them
Freedoms four and the right to live them.

I will have little to leave you, my son,
When this brief day called life is done.
No stocks, no bonds, no gems I own,
No costly mansion built of stone.

What then shall I leave you when I go?
Only these simple gifts I bestow:

Feel of cleansing snow in your face,
The keen, impulsive wind's embrace,
White moons cruising through the night,
Rivers bathed in cool moonlight.

Passion for wisdom, a heart to bleed
When one less fortunate is in need,
Zeal for knowledge, thirst for truth,
Immortal faith in the God of your youth.

These I leave you in sacred trust:
Fearing not thief or moth or rust.

I cannot give you gold, for I have none.
I gave you life and breathing at your birth;
Courage, I hope, to reach some flaming sun;
And vision for your service here on earth.

I dare you now to trust that men are good,
To persevere—never to miss a chance
For thinking deeply, sanely—as you should,
To practice using love and tolerance.

I leave you Nature's charm, the ever-changing sky,
Green fields of grain and furrowed, fallow soil.
The privilege no tyrant can deny—
The clean rewards and honesty of toil.
This is my wish. What other could it be?
I have no gold: this is your legacy.



HAZEL BEACH

"Let's Go to My House"

MAXINE S. MORGAN

"Christians have a better time than everybody else in the world" was a statement I heard at Ridgecrest last summer. The laughter of a group leaving the auditorium after a party was the inspiration for that remark. The words started me thinking and wondering. Is it true?

That Christians should be the most joyous group in the world is true. The knowledge that we are living in Christ and he in us should enable us to enjoy to the fullest our fun and recreation when they are distinctively Christian. Furthermore, we have another advantage in our Christian recreation in that in Christian fun there are no "hang-overs." Christian recreation literally re-creates.

Now if it is true that Christians can have better times at home than anywhere else, why do so few of our boys and girls say to their friends, "Let's go to my house"? Why do they prefer to go to some other home, to a show, or to a soda shop every time the group gets together?

Can the reason be that some parents have forgotten how to have a good time as a family? Have they become too tired and too tense to have pleasure in the home? Can it be that the young people have decided, from watching some of the older folk, that there is no pleasure in their parents' way of having a good time?

Recently I read a magazine article which told of a young child seated at the dinner table with her parents and a guest. In the course of the meal an amusing remark was made and the guest, throwing back her head, laughed heartily. The young child in amazement looked at her mother and asked, "Mother, what's she doing?"

You can imagine the effect of that question on the parents. They had scheduled carefully the child's daily life. They had been concerned overmuch about her vitamins, her calcium, her physical requirements, but they realized suddenly that they had been so engrossed with the details of living that they had let tension come in and had crowded out relaxation and fun.

How often we have done the same thing in dozens of ways! How often we have been

too busy to listen to a child's exciting, thrilling account of an experience which to us may seem commonplace! Too often we have let petty worries and anxieties stifle our impulses to have a good time—and still we wonder why Mary and Johnny never say to their friends, "Let's go to my house."

I shall never forget a family I knew years ago. In the home there were five children whose ages ranged from twelve to twenty-one. I think I have never seen a group have as much fun as that family had. Two or three of them played the piano, all could sing, and they all loved life! This happy Christian family found its best times at home. I heard one of the older boys say once, "It's just like a party at home every evening."

I was in that home often and not once did I fail to see smiles of welcome from the parents to their children and their friends. Not once did I see the father and mother too tired or too busy to join in a group song or to eat some popcorn or candy—or even to indulge in soda pop or ice cream late at night.

Many parents who today are bemoaning the fact that their teen-age sons and daughters are seeking all of their entertainment away from home might well stop and check up on themselves to see when and where they first started losing out with their children. Parents are busy, no doubt, but oftentimes they need to stop and ask "Is what I am busy doing worth as much as my child's happiness?" My sympathy goes out to the child whose mother and father are so busy taking care of church, business, or civic affairs that their usual answer to a question or statement of their child is "Don't bother me now. I'm too busy."

I know a mother of a five-year-old girl who demonstrates well what can be done by a parent who has always been unusually active in affairs outside her home. She is constantly in demand as a speaker and leader. However, she has learned to say no when necessary. Never have I seen her too busy to listen to her young daughter's experiences. She has taken time to teach

her child about flowers, trees, birds. (And it takes an enormous amount of time!) As a result of her patience and wisdom, her child is finding wonderful adventures every hour of every day—that mother is making home a place of interest to her child even though it has meant that she had to give up many outside activities. I am confident that the results which she has obtained justify any sacrifice on the mother's part.

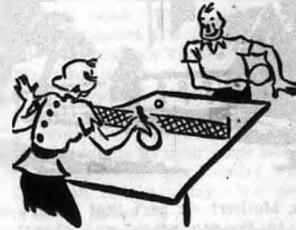
From the time that he is a toddler, every child deserves to have some time of his own with a father who has retained his sense of humor and his memories of childhood days with their longings and uncertainties. Every child deserves to know that he is important enough to his father that business can occasionally be put aside for a fishing trip, a picture show, or a day in a near-by city. What adventures may happen on even a short trip! How often it is true that we adults have lost that touch of magic that can change a simple happening into a glorious adventure!

William L. Stidger, in his book *More Sermons in Stories*, tells of a tradition in his family. He and his young daughter Betty, from the time she was four, had what they called "One Adventure Each Day." They deliberately hunted for an adventure. Maybe they found a big tree and together imagined the adventurous things it had seen in its long life—Indians, pioneers, storms. Sometimes they would pretend they were pioneers and walk across a snowy field instead of in the path that had been made for them. Do you as a parent have time to have an adventure a day with your children? I can hear some father saying, "But I don't have time." And I cannot keep from wondering if the things on which he is expending his energy will bring the dividends that "an adventure a day" with his child might bring.

Maybe all of us do not have the imagination of Mr. Stidger, but there are many simple, everyday plans which parents can carry out with their children. For instance, one can usually find room for a game in the back yard—croquet, badminton, shuffleboard, darts, Ping-pong, or horseshoes. A family tournament is always fun. There can be picnics in the yard, short hikes to a creek, a lake, or a wooded spot, or treasure hunts at home. There are many families

which could afford an outdoor fireplace if they really want it.

I know a father of a teen-age girl who, when the daughter began dating, fixed up



a corner of the back yard with outdoor oven, table, chairs, and games. He was gratified to find that not only did his daughter say often to her friends, "Let's go to my house," but also her friends repeatedly clamored, "Let's go to your house. We can have so much fun there!"

It should not be expected that spending time with the children will solve all the problems of the family. Regardless of the efforts which are made, some boys and girls will seek their recreation in places other than their homes and in ways that are not Christian. If, however, they have had Christian influences in their homes, there is strong likelihood that they will eventually return to the Christian way of living and will prefer it to all other ways.

Some mothers have been slaves to their families and have given up all outside interests and activities. This is a sure way to lose the respect and admiration of children and is just as mistaken as the method of being too busy. Somewhere between these two extremes will be found the method used by parents who have been most successful. Early in the history of their families they laid the foundation of appreciation of the right kind of good times. They have demonstrated by their own good times with their friends and with their children that Christian fun is the best kind. They were willing to put aside their own interests and to participate in the pleasures of their children. These are the parents who can smile their approval and satisfaction over a job well done when they hear their son or daughter say, "Let's go to my house!"



THE AMERICAN PATTERN

MABEL THOMPSON RAUCH

had entered her teens, and to this youthful member of the family the stories of the past which Grandmother told were more fascinating than any fiction she had ever read.

When I saw my mother's face in the doorway, I knew that help had come. But before I could speak, my daughter had run to seat her grandmother in a comfortable chair and to sit beside her on a footstool where she could look up into her face. I drew my own chair nearer. Her grandmother smoothed the rich brown curls.

"You remind me so much of myself as a girl," she said. "I was just about your size, and so full of life and impatience. I've lived a long time—that was nearly seventy years ago—and the things I learned as a child and a young girl in my Sunday school and church have made it possible for me to travel this long road and find happiness here at the end. And sometimes, my dear, the road grew very dark, and there was only my faith to sustain me."

She paused for a moment and I knew she was thinking of the sorrows which had come to her during a long life.

"But I wanted to tell you why you mustn't mind getting up early to attend worship. You see, there is so little you can do to pay back the debt you owe to the past. Today, dear, you sit here in your comfortable home surrounded by all the conveniences and luxuries of modern life. But behind you, stretching away back through the distant years, are all the women that came before you—your pioneer forebears who made this life possible.

"My forefathers came into the wilderness of Little Egypt in southern Illinois from North Carolina through the Cumberland Gap route shortly after 1800. The men carried their long rifles to protect their families against lurking savages and animals, but the women carried their Bibles. They knew that ahead of them were suffering and sorrow from which no rifles could protect them.

"And on the sabbath day they camped beside the Wilderness Trail and read the

Bible to their families and offered prayers for their safety. There was no thought of how early they had to get up. They arose and pressed onward as soon as it was light enough to distinguish the dangers of the rough road and the shadowy forest.

"I was born in a log house on the farm my forefathers had hewn out of the woods. I was next to the oldest of six children; I helped with the work and learned to care for the younger ones. Life didn't seem hard to me then, for we expected things to be that way. No matter how hard we worked all week, we arose before daybreak on Sunday mornings so that we might go to Sunday school and church.

"There was an abundant breakfast to be cooked and eaten, dishes and beds to be put in order, and the farm work of milking and feeding the animals to be done before we could start. Then what a polishing of faces and dressing in our meager best to honor the occasion of entering God's house! At last we would set out on the long miles of rough road, jolting along in the farm wagon.

"At first there was only a log church, but later the settlers raised enough money to buy sawed lumber, and the men built a meetinghouse on the bluffs above the nearest village. It was painted white, and after using the log church so long we all thought it very beautiful. That little country church is still standing, and among the graves surrounding it are those of four of your great-grandparents.

"After the services of the day were over, it would be well into the afternoon before our wagon drove into our farm home. But we didn't begrudge the time we had given to God. We felt that it was a privilege to have homes and security and a real church in which we could worship.

"I learned in that little Sunday school and church all the things that are needed to sustain a woman and carry her through the darkest hours of life—when my first baby passed away with whooping cough when he was only six weeks old, the terrible time when I lay ill with the smallpox and my little girl of three died with it. People were so afraid of the disease in those days that they would not allow her to be taken to the cemetery, but your grandfather, helped by an old Negro man who had had

the smallpox in slavery, buried her in our own front garden . . .

"Oh, my dear, things are so easy for women today! Don't let luxury and slothful habits destroy all that we who came before you sacrificed for generations to attain. No matter how much wealth, how many modern conveniences one has, there come times in every woman's life when she needs her faith in our Heavenly Father—the faith nurtured by years of sitting in study and prayer in his house. Don't lose the pattern that the women of our pioneer days gave to their descendants by their labor and love, the pattern that made our country a great, free, Christian nation today. We need it now as never before . . ."

My daughter dried her eyes. We all sat silent for a few moments. Outside in the gathering dusk a newsboy called shrilly, "Terrible battle raging, American forces engage . . ."

I had heard that cry once before during my lifetime.

My daughter lifted her head.

"Grandma," she said, "I wish every girl had a grandmother like you! We haven't lost the pattern! It's just that no one tells us these things! We're so busy being sophisticated today we've forgotten about being sincere, and all the other worth-while things. Now I understand. I'll always understand, and I'll always remember!"

△ △ △

TODAY

LYDIA L. ROBERTS

Today is ours—let's live it.
And love is strong—let's give it.
A song can help—let's sing it.
And peace is dear—let's bring it.

The past is gone—don't rue it.
Our work is here—let's do it.
The world is wrong—let's right it.
If evil comes—let's fight it.

The road is rough—let's clear it.
The future vast—don't fear it.
Is faith asleep?—let's wake it.
Today is free—let's take it.

PRAYER

and the Green Linen Suit

FRANCES FOWLER ALLEN

"Shall I wear my green linen suit tomorrow?" I mused. Then I jerked myself upright, horrified. For I was on my knees. I had thought I was praying! How had my prayer, begun in sincerity, ended in a petty sartorial problem? Painfully I waded back through my stream of consciousness.

"Thy will be done," I had prayed; then I paused to ponder the difficulty of recognizing God's will in the midst of the multiplicity of today's demands. I was currently being urged to accept Red Cross work, lead a Girl Scout troop, and take a Sunday school class. I couldn't do justice to all three, but how should I choose? The Red Cross work would necessitate a uniform. How would the purchase affect my clothing budget? Last year's green linen suit was holding up well. Should I wear the green linen suit to the luncheon tomorrow? . . . There, I had caught up with myself, and I blushed for it.

Would I have started a conversation with an earthly friend, and then have kept him waiting while my mind wandered off on such bypaths? Why should I offer my other Friend such discourtesy and expect to rise from my "prayers" cleansed, refreshed, strengthened? Were others ever guilty of such muddled, fruitless praying? What was the answer?

I consulted my Goodspeed translation of the New Testament and opened to this passage from the Sermon on the Mount:

Ask, and what you ask will be given you. Search, and you will find what you search for. Knock, and the door will open to you. For it is always the one who asks who receives, and the one who searches who finds, and the one who knocks to whom the door opens.

Light flooded in. Instantly, this passage tied in with my studies in psychology, which declared that this principle, which Jesus calls "asking, searching, knocking," underlies success in anything, be it painting, preaching, or pie-making.

First, psychologists say, define your purpose clearly. Do you want to be a musician? Visualize yourself as a musician. Be definite. What instrument do you want to play? How many hours will you practice? What will you give up in order to achieve your goal?

Having once clearly defined the goal, you will find that everything works to that end. Here is where the "asking, searching, knocking" comes into its own. Ways open up. Teachers are found. Somehow money is earned. Read any great biography. "What one supremely desires, he obtains," testifies Willa Cather. But he must clearly, definitely desire it; and he must be willing to pay the price. The great Psychologist of Galilee proclaimed the precept more than eighteen hundred years before the time of Freud, Adler, and James.

How did this bear on my muddled praying? I realized it was muddled because in the petitionary part of my prayer I had not clearly defined my supreme desire. Next, it was muddled because I lacked concentration. To gain that, I tried speaking my prayer aloud. It is astonishing how this simple change focused wavering thoughts, gave petitions definiteness. Last, when I felt "dry" and loath to begin I learned to repeat thoughtfully the Lord's Prayer or an appropriate psalm. Usually that sufficed to start me on original prayer. If not, I arose and went about my business, strengthened by noble words repeated by rote. Never again will I offer my Father the insult of a wandering mind!

Books on prayer began to attract me. I was amazed to learn that many people had experienced the same problems that I had faced and had solved them creatively. I have learned to recognize many varieties of prayer: thanksgiving for the blessings of every day, intercession of friend for friend, the agonized pleading of extremity, and the silent contemplation of the saint.

I am still in the kindergarten of prayer—but at least I have escaped from that green linen suit!

ALTAR FIRES

Recommended for Daily Worship in the Home

PREPARED BY W. CLYDE ATKINS

Third Quarter, 1945

STUDIES IN GENESIS

LESSON FOR JULY I

God's Joy in Creation

Genesis 1:1-5, 10-12, 16-18, 26-27, 31
Explained in Daily Reading for Monday

Memory Selection: God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.
Genesis 1:31.

MONDAY, JUNE 25

God's Joy in Creation—Genesis 1:1-5

1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

2 *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

3 ¶ *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

4 *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

5 *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

During this quarter we study the book of Genesis, which is a book of beginnings. As we meditate upon the teachings of this great and interesting book, our prayer is that we shall be conscious of the presence of God, that we shall be drawn nearer to him, and that we shall be better Christians, serving our God faithfully day by day.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:1, 31).

Men and women rejoice in making things, in doing the work which they are able to do, and in seeing the fruits of their labors.

If we find such joy in the things which we make out of materials which already exist, how great must have been the joy of God when he created the heavens and the earth out of things which had not existed. God put forth his divine will and the world came into being. He created a home for the animals and a home for man. He created the animals; he created man and woman. He saw that all which he had made was good and he rejoiced.

¶ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for creating the heaven and the earth. We thank thee for creating man and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. We think of thy joy in creation, rejoicing with thee in the knowledge that all things were good when thou didst create them. Help us, O God, to acknowledge thee as our Creator and to love and serve thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, JUNE 26

God, the Creator of All Things—Acts 17:24-28

24 *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;*

25 *Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;*

26 *And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;*

27 *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*

28 *For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.*

As Paul walked through the streets of Athens, he saw that the people had erected altars to many gods. He even found an altar with this inscription, "To the Unknown God." The people of Athens believed in many gods, and Paul sought to make known to them the one true God. He proclaimed the glorious truth that God is One, that God made the world and all things therein, that he is the Lord of heaven and earth. Paul sought to show to them that God does not dwell in temples made with hands, that he did not need their sacrifices, but that he was the one who gave to them life and breath and all things. God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth and appointed their times and the bounds of their habitation. Men should seek him if haply they might feel after him and find him.

Paul believed and taught that God created all things. This is the teaching of the first two chapters of Genesis. It is the teaching of the whole Bible. Without him was not anything made that was made.

* Our Heavenly Father, thou didst create the world and all things therein, we seek thee, knowing that thou art not far from any of us, for in thee we live and move and have our being. Help us to know that we are thy creation, thy offspring, thy children. Help us to live in such a way as to bring glory to thy most holy name and to use aright all that thou hast created for the good of man. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27

Thanksgiving to the Creator—Psalm 100:1-5

1 *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.*

2 *Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

3 *Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

4 *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

5 *For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Early in life we learn by heart the one hundredth Psalm. Throughout life we should be able to say this psalm from the heart. We and all people everywhere are called upon to praise God because of his deeds and because of his character. We are to know that he is God, that he has made us, and that we are his. We are to think of his goodness, his loving-kindness, his mercy, his faithfulness, his truth, his eternity. It is a joy to give thanks to our Creator and God.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, prepare our hearts to praise thee and be pleased to accept the praise which we offer. We are thankful unto thee and we praise thy name. We desire to serve thee with gladness, to bow before thee in adoration, and to proclaim the truth that thou hast made us and that we are thine. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, JUNE 28

The Majesty of the Creator—Psalm 93:1-5

1 *The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved.*

2 *Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.*

3 *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.*

4 *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*

5 *Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.*

Perhaps very few of us think as highly of God as we ought to think. The Creator is clothed with majesty and with strength. He reigns over all.

We think of the universe. How beautiful and wonderful it is! Yet God is greater than the universe which he has created.

We think of man, of the nobility of his spirit, of the worth of his soul. Yet God is greater than man.

We read again from Isaiah 40 and our souls are inspired and uplifted as we think of the majesty of our God. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (vv. 28-29).

* Our gracious God, we accept thee as our King, our Ruler, our Lord. We think of thy majesty and glory, and we bow before thee in humility and reverence beseeching thee to forgive our sins and to accept us as thy servants. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, JUNE 29

God's Thought of Man—Psalm 8:1-9

1 *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.*

2 *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

3 *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;*

4 *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

5 *For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*

6 *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:*

7 *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;*

8 *The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

9 *O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

When the psalmist considered the universe and saw its greatness and immensity and then considered man, his weakness and his littleness, he asked, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

God's universe is great, but man is greater. Man can think but the world cannot.

The little child is more precious than the house in which the child lives. The house may be large, it may be costly, but its worth does not compare with that of the person or persons who live in it. God cares for man. He cares for every man. The mother and father who have many children love each one as though they had only one. God loves all his children and has made provision for the needs of every one. * Our Heavenly Father, as we meditate upon thy thought of man, may we think of thee and worship thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, JUNE 30

Our Faith in the Creator—Hebrews 11:1-3

1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

2 *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*

3 *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

We accept and believe the story of the creation by faith. Adam and Eve were the crowning work of creation. There was no man present to see when or how the creation took place. Perhaps God communicated the facts directly to Moses, the author of the book of Genesis. Certainly Moses wrote under the guidance and inspiration of God's Spirit. Perhaps God communicated the facts both to Adam and to Moses. We know that God created all things and that he created them for a purpose, and we know the One who created will uphold and sustain.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we come to thee in faith, believing that thou hast created us, that thou hast created the world in which we live, and that thou dost care for us day by day. Increase our faith in thee. Forgive our sins and strengthen us for the duties of this day and every day. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, JULY 1

God's Beautiful World—Psalm 19:1-6

1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

2 *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

3 *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The world in which we live is beautiful. "Every prospect pleases." We think of the beauties of the heavens: the stars, the sun and the moon, the sunrise, the rainbow, the sunset. We think of the mountains, the valleys and prairies. We think of the rivers, the seas, and the oceans. We think of the birds and trees and flowers. Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed in beauty such as clothes the lilies of the field.

We sing "America the Beautiful." America is beautiful, and so are the other countries of the world. This is our Father's world and he has made everything beautiful in its time.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt enable us to see in the beauties of this world the revelation of thy character through thy handiwork and the evidence of thy love for man. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—The Crucifixion. Mark 15:20-38
T.—The Resurrection. Mark 16:1-8
W.—The Appearances. Mark 16:9-20
T.—Joshua's Death. Judg. 2:1-10
F.—The Judges. Judg. 2:11-23
S.—God's Joy in Creation. Gen. 1:1-5, 10-12, 16-18, 26-27, 31
S.—Deborah. Judg. 4:4-21

LESSON FOR JULY 3

Man's Failures and God's Promises

Genesis 6:5-7; 8:1, 4, 18, 20-22
Explained in Daily Reading for Friday

Memory Selection: While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. Genesis 8:22.

MONDAY, JULY 2

Man's Failure to Obey God—Genesis 3:1-6

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yet, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant

to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

The story of the entrance of sin into the world is one of the saddest stories on record. God had manifested his goodness to Adam and Eve. He had shown forth his wisdom. He had made provision for their every need.

Disobedience to God is the very essence of sin. Eve and Adam sinned, and with the exception of Jesus Christ, all who have lived through the centuries have sinned and come short of the glory of God. How tragic are the consequences of man's failure to obey God.

* We pray, our Heavenly Father, that thou wilt forgive our sins, that thou wilt create within every one of us a clean heart. O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Help us to trust thee and obey thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, JULY 3

Disobedience Brings Fear—Genesis 3:8-13

8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Before Eve and Adam sinned, they had enjoyed perfect fellowship and communion with God. After they sinned, they became ashamed and afraid. They tried to hide from God. God called upon them to give an account of what they had done. He pronounced sentence upon the serpent, upon Eve, and upon Adam. Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Eden. They suffered because of their sin, and through the centuries men have suffered because of their sin. We suffer because of their sin and because of our own sins.

Sin brings fear. It breaks the communion with God. It destroys fellowship and brings punishment.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt remove from us everything that destroys our fellowship with our fellow man or our communion with thee. Forgive us for disobeying thy commandments, and strengthen us for the work which thou hast called us to do. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 4

God's Promise to Noah—Genesis 6:17-22

17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

18 But with thee will I establish my cov-

enant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

We are told that "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). Noah was righteous when people around him were wicked. Noah had faith in God when those around him were filled with doubt. We can imagine that it was not easy for Noah and his family to live as they did when men round about them were so wicked. We can derive a message of encouragement from their example.

Noah believed God's promise. He heeded his warning, and he, because of his faith in God, built for the future and thus blessed mankind.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, on this day which means so much to the people of the United States of America, we thank thee for the way in which thou hast led and blessed our country, and we pray that our nation shall be a nation whose God is the Lord and that the people of our country and of the world shall trust, love, and serve thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, JULY 5

God's Promise of Forgiveness—1 John 1:5-9

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

On one occasion I was asked by a young husband to go and talk with his wife from whom he was estranged and to seek to bring about a reconciliation. The young woman said that she would not forgive her husband no matter what he said or did. The young man was heartbroken. How awful it is when a human being will not forgive another.

How terrible it would be if God would not forgive man. Soon after man first sinned God made a promise which was filled with hope. He promised that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." One of man's greatest needs, if not the greatest, is his need of forgiveness. How grateful we are that God is willing to forgive.

*My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!*

Amen.

FRIDAY, JULY 6

God's Promise of the Seasons—Genesis 8:20-22

20 ¶ *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

21 *And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.*

22 *While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

At the command of God, Noah and his family went into the ark. At the command of God after the flood waters had receded, Noah and his family came forth from the

ark. The first thing that Noah did after coming forth from the ark was to build an altar unto the Lord to offer sacrifices and to worship. God was pleased with Noah's worship, and with his offering and sacrifice, and God said in his heart that he would not again curse the ground for man's sake and that he would not again destroy everything living as he had done through the flood.

God can be trusted. His promises do not fail. Nature can be relied upon. How important it is to farmers to know when to plant so that the crop can be harvested. The regularity of the seasons is a cause for thanksgiving and gratitude.

¶ We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that thou dost send the sunshine and the rain. We thank thee that seedtime is followed by harvest, that summer follows winter, that night is followed by day, that thou dost give to us that which we need. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SATURDAY, JULY 7

God's Promise of a Saviour—Micah 5:2-4

2 *But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

3 *Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.*

4 ¶ *And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.*

Of all of God's promises, the promise of a Saviour is the best. Beginning with Genesis 3:15 this promise runs throughout the Old Testament and in the New Testament we see the record of its fulfilment. Micah prophesied the place of the Saviour's birth. He prophesied that the Saviour would be born in Bethlehem, that he was to be a ruler, that he would wait until the appointed time. He spoke of his majesty, his eternity, and the universality of his work.

We rejoice in the promise of a Saviour. We rejoice in the coming of the Saviour.

We rejoice when we accept him as our personal Saviour. It is not enough to think of Jesus Christ as a Saviour. We are to think of him as the Saviour, the only Saviour, and each one of us should so trust him and love him and serve him that we can speak of him as "my Saviour."

¶ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the birth in Bethlehem of Judea of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Lord. May each one of us trust in him and find salvation, and may each one tell others of the Saviour. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, JULY 8

Thanksgiving for God's Mercies—Psalm 103:1-9

1 *Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

2 *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

3 *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

4 *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*

5 *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

6 *The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.*

7 *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

8 *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

9 *He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*

The psalmist called upon his soul to bless the Lord, to remember what God had done for him, and to give thanks. He thanked God for forgiveness, healing, redemption, his loving-kindnesses and tender mercies, for the satisfaction of his needs, for renewal, for righteousness and judgment, for revelation and mercy and grace. The language of Psalm 103 will ever be used by devout souls to express their thanksgiving for God's mercies.

How beautiful is the grace of gratitude. What a blessed thing it is to count your blessings and remember what God has done for you.

¶ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we give thee thanks for our homes and our loved ones. We give thee thanks for our churches and for our country. We give thee thanks for our Saviour and Lord. We give thee thanks for all that thou art to us and for all that thou hast done for us. In our homes and in our churches may we truly praise thee this day. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Gideon's Call. Judg. 6:11-23

T.—Gideon's Victory. Judg. 7:9-23

W.—Jephthah's Vow. Judg. 11:29-40

T.—Birth of Samson. Judg. 13:1-7, 24

F.—Samson's Victory. Judg. 15:9-20

S.—Man's Failures and God's Promises. Gen. 6:5-7;

8:1, 4, 18, 20-22

S.—Delilah. Judg. 16:4-22

LESSON FOR JULY 15

God's Purpose for Abraham

Genesis 12:1-9

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Tuesday

Memory Selection: In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. Genesis 12:3.

MONDAY, JULY 9

Abraham Called to Be a Blessing—Genesis 12:1-5

1 *Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:*

2 *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

3 *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

4 *So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

5 *And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance*

that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

The call of Abraham marks the beginning of a new era in world history and in the history of redemption. Abram, the son of Terah, was called by God to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees and to go into a land which God would show him.

God promised to bless Abraham and to make him a blessing. God promised that through Abraham and his descendants all the families of the earth should be blessed. God fulfilled his promise. Through the faith, the obedience and the posterity of Abraham, "the friend of God," "the father of the faithful," all men have been blessed and are being blessed.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for Abraham. We thank thee that thou didst bless him and through him all mankind. Help us to appreciate the men of old who trusted and obeyed thee, and grant that we may trust and obey thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, JULY 10

Abraham Worships God—Genesis 12:6-8

¶ And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

7 And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.

When Abraham and his family left Ur of the Chaldees, they did not know to what place they were going. They stopped at Haran and spent some time there, and it was there that Abraham's father died. Abraham, his wife Sarah, his nephew Lot, and their servants left Haran to go into Canaan, and when they came to Shechem, Abraham built an altar unto the Lord who had appeared unto him. When he moved to a place near Bethel, he built an altar unto the Lord again and called upon his

name. Wherever Abraham was, he worshiped God.

How important it is to keep the altar fire burning brightly. Each one should have a prayer room in the home. The church is a house of prayer. Private worship and public worship are pleasing unto God. Both are necessary to the growth and development of Christian life and character.

* Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the privilege of worship. We thank thee for others who have worshiped thee, and we rejoice that we can worship thee in spirit and in truth. Bless all who worship at the family altar. Bless all who worship at the church. Bless all who worship thee everywhere. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 11

Abraham, a Man of Faith—Hebrews 11:8-10

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

When God called Abraham to go out unto a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went. Someone has said that Abraham did not know where he was going, but he knew with whom he was going. Because he was going with God, he was unafraid.

Abraham lived for the things of eternity rather than for the things of time. Because of his faith in God, he was able to order his life according to God's will.

We are sojourners in the land. In a sense we are like Abraham. We go out from day to day and from year to year not knowing what the future will hold, but confident and trustful because we know that God cares for and guides those who trust him.

* We pray, our Heavenly Father, that thou wilt increase our faith, so that we may face today and tomorrow unafraid. Enable us to follow where thou dost lead and to go where thou dost command. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, JULY 12

God's Purpose for Joshua—Joshua 1:1-9

1 Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

2 Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto thy fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua had been loyal to Moses. He had shown many evidences of courage and leadership ability. When Moses died, God called Joshua to lead the children of Israel across the Jordan River to conquer the land and to divide it among the various tribes.

God commanded Joshua to be strong and of good courage. He was to study and meditate upon the book of the law and to do according to all that the law commanded.

He was a man of decision, a man who trusted in God, a man who led his family to serve the Lord, a man who exhorted the people of Israel after they settled in the Promised Land to choose the true God as their God and to serve him faithfully.

* Our Father in heaven, as thou didst have a purpose for the life of Joshua, so we believe that thou dost have a purpose for the life of every person. Help each one of us to discover why thou hast placed us where we are and what thou wouldst have us do. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, JULY 13

Prayer for God's Guidance—Psalm 25:1-5

1 Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

We believe that God guided great men like Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua. Do we believe that he is willing to guide and can guide each one of us? Does he guide your life? Do you want him to guide your life? Do you seek and pray for his guidance?

We see the guiding hand of God in history, in the life of nations, in the life of institutions. We believe that we also can see his guiding hand in the lives of individuals.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro' this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

—WILLIAM WILLIAMS

* We pray, our Heavenly Father, that thou wilt guide us in all that we think, do, and say this day and every day. Help us to commit our way unto thee. Help us to rest

in thee and wait patiently for thee. Help us to follow the teachings of thy word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, JULY 14

Prayer for God's Presence—I Kings 8:57-61

57 *The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:*

58 *That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.*

59 *And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:*

60 *That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else.*

61 *Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.*

Our reading today is a part of the prayer which Solomon offered at the dedication of the Temple. No priest or prophet could have offered a better prayer than that which was offered by Solomon the king. He knew that God had been present with their fathers, that he had been their help and strength, and he desired that they might experience the blessing of God's presence, that they might incline their hearts unto God, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments. We may be certain that his prayer was answered.

Jacob at Bethel, Moses at the burning bush, Isaiah in the Temple, and Saul on the road to Damascus experienced the presence of God. We can experience the blessings of his presence, and we should seek to live our lives in the conscious presence of God.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we pray even as Solomon prayed that all the people of the earth may know that thou art God and that there is none else. May we know that thou art ever present, and may we seek to live in such a way as to please thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, JULY 15

The Ever-Present God—Psalm 139:7-12

7 *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

8 *If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

9 *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

10 *Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

11 *If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

12 *Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

The fact that God is ever present should fill our hearts with joy. It is a most welcome thought if our hearts are right with God. The child likes to have his mother or father near, especially in the night, in the storm, or when danger is near. The child likes to have his mother or father near when the way is strange or new, when he is hungry, thirsty, or tired. The child who loves his parents likes to have the father and mother near at all times.

The person whose conscience troubles him, the person bent on having his own way, and the person who has been and is disobedient to God finds no joy in the thought that God is ever hearing what he says and watching what he does; but the remedy is not found in trying to flee from God or hide from him but in going to him, asking for forgiveness, and seeking to know and do his will.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we know that thou art not far from any of us because in thee we live and move and have our being. Forgive our sins and enable us to rejoice in thy presence. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Samson's Death. Judg. 16:23-30

T.—Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 1

W.—Cleansing. Ruth 2

T.—Boaz. Ruth 3

F.—Marriage. Ruth 4

S.—God's Purpose for Abraham. Gen. 12:1-9

S.—Samuel Born. 1 Sam. 1:12-28

LESSON FOR JULY 22

Abraham's Practice of Brotherhood

Genesis 13:1-12

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Tuesday

Memory Selection: Let there be no strife, I pray thee, . . . for we be brethren. Genesis 13:8.

MONDAY, JULY 16

Abraham's Unselfish Spirit—Genesis 13:1-9

1 *And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.*

2 *And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*

3 *And he went on his journeys from the south even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai;*

4 *Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.*

5 ¶ *And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.*

6 *And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.*

7 *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.*

8 *And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*

9 *Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

Abraham and his nephew Lot prospered exceedingly in the land of Canaan. Their substance became so great that it was not easy for them to dwell together. There arose strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle. It became evident to Abraham that it was wise for them to separate. He did not want any quarrel between Lot and himself or between Lot's servants and his servants.

Abraham gave to Lot the privilege of choosing which part of the land he would

rather have. He was willing to take the part of the land which Lot did not choose.

To have peace is better than to try to have your own way. A man of great faith is bighearted. The man living for eternity rather than time will not spend his days in quarrelling over material things. He knows that spiritual values are worth infinitely more than material values. He is more eager to prevent or to cure strife than he is to gain material possessions.

✠ Our Father in heaven, give unto each one of us an unselfish spirit. Keep us from seeking to prosper at the expense of someone else. Help us to be bighearted, sharing with others that which thou hast entrusted unto us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, JULY 17

Lot's Selfish Spirit—Genesis 13:10-13

10 *And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.*

11 *Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.*

12 *Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.*

13 *But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.*

The spirit which caused Abraham to make such a generous offer to Lot was not found in Lot. Lot was selfish. He chose what he believed to be the best land, the easiest course, the way of worldly prosperity. He disregarded Abraham's many kindnesses. He chose the plain of the Jordan. He prospered for a while, but when Sodom was destroyed all of Lot's possessions perished with Sodom, and sorrow, tragedy and death came to his family.

Are we like Lot? In choosing our work do we ask only, "How much will this job pay?" Is it our aim in life to choose the easiest course, to do that which will help us to get rich quickly? Are we thinking only of self, living for the present and willing to subject our families to physical, moral, and spiritual danger in order to gain worldly prosperity? Selfishness is sin. Selfishness leads to sorrow. Selfishness never satisfies. The man who places himself first will never find happiness or blessedness.

In English grammar we are taught that the first person is I, the second person you, and the third person he; but in spiritual grammar the first person is He, the second person is you, and the third person is I. He must come first, and I must come last.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, deliver us from selfishness in the home, in the church and everywhere. Help us to think of others' welfare and to seek to minister to their needs, and may we ever give to thee the first place in our thoughts and affections. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 18

Abraham Helps Lot—Genesis 14:13-16

13 ¶ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

When one member of a family manifests a selfish or an ugly spirit, wounds are made which sometimes never heal. Many people, having been treated by some relative as Abraham was treated by Lot, would not have felt kindly toward that person in the future and would not have been willing to help that person; but Abraham loved his nephew Lot. Abraham forgave Lot and

rescued him from the kings who had captured him, and later Abraham prayed that God would spare Sodom, the city in which Lot had made his home.

Abraham's spirit is inspiring and challenging. The man of faith will be a man of unlimited good will. A man of faith must continue to cherish the right attitudes toward others whether those attitudes awaken a good response or not. The man who trusts in God must determine his course, not by the attitudes of the people around him, but by what he knows to be the will of God.

✠ Our Father in heaven, as Abraham helped Lot, so may we seek to help those who have manifested a selfish spirit toward us and who have caused us sorrow and trouble. Enable us to cherish a spirit of good will toward every person. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, JULY 19

Spiritual Kinship—Mark 3:31-35

31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

The mother and brothers of Jesus came seeking him and perhaps desiring to take him home, thinking that they would take him away from the criticism and persecution of the multitude to a place of shelter and security. When Jesus was told that his mother and brethren had come seeking for him, he looked upon those who sat before him and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren!"

How sacred are the ties which bind families together. Jesus loved his mother and he loved his brethren too, but he loves all and claims kinship with all who do the will of God.

"One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). The ties which bind Christians to one another and

to Jesus Christ are sacred. We are bound in the bundle of life together. Our hearts are united in a common fellowship of faith and love.

✠ Gracious God, we thank thee that we can call thee our Father, that we can call Jesus Christ our Elder Brother and Saviour, and that we can call each brother and sister in the name of Jesus Christ. We thank thee that Jesus Christ calls us his friends, his brethren. Bless thy great family throughout the world. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, JULY 20

Duty to Neighbors—Mark 12:28-34

28 ¶ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

On a farm adjoining my father's farm there was a big walnut tree. It stood very near the fence which separated the two farms. The tree drew almost half of its nourishment from my father's land and almost half of the walnuts fell in his field, but the tree was growing on our neighbor's property. This could have caused a family quarrel, especially since my father had six boys and four girls, all of whom liked walnuts. My father said to our neighbor that since the tree was growing on his land he

was entitled to all of the walnuts. The neighbor said that that might be true but that the tree was drawing half of its nourishment from my father's land and that, therefore, we should have all the walnuts that fell in our field. For many years the tree bore enough walnuts to satisfy the two families, and all of us were happy.

How beautiful it is when we find a spirit of friendliness, of consideration, of good will and helpfulness among neighbors. The neighborly spirit is needed in the city as well as in the country. It is not enough to possess this spirit. It must be given expression in daily life. We remember the parable of the good Samaritan. Let us find true happiness in befriending our neighbors, in sharing that which we have with them, and in seeking to win them to Jesus Christ.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, help us always to manifest the neighborly spirit and to minister to others whenever we have the opportunity. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, JULY 21

Duty to Enemies—Luke 6:27-35

27 ¶ But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

It is not easy to love our enemies, but we must love them if we are true Christians. We cannot pray that our enemies will triumph, but we can pray that they will see the error of their way and that they will be converted, and we can show kindness to them as we have opportunity. This is the only way to change our enemies into friends.

In the Mothers' Meeting of our church we have an Armenian woman whose father was slaughtered by the Turks during the first World War. Within a week his wife was going among the Turkish soldiers proclaiming to them the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If God had followed the policy of destroying all of his enemies, all of us would have been destroyed, but while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God seeks to change his enemies into friends, to lead sinners to salvation.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the way that thou dost deal with sinners and for the way that thou dost treat thine enemies. Fill us with thy spirit that we may treat our enemies as thou wouldst have us treat them. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, JULY 22

Duty to Strangers—Leviticus 19:33-37

33 ¶ *And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him.*

34 *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.*

35 ¶ *Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure.*

36 *Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.*

37 *Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I am the Lord.*

The children of Israel were exhorted to be kind to strangers, to be considerate, not to vex them, to deal righteously in judgment, to use just balances and just weights, and to love them.

Many times the visit of a stranger to the home will be remembered for many years. The visit of a stranger to the church may

bring blessings untold. Think of what it meant to the small group which was gathered by the riverside for prayer at Philippi when Paul and his three companions came preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).

In the parable of the last judgment recorded in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, help us to be hospitable and kind to strangers in our homes and in the church. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

DESERT WELL

JESSIE BROWN THOMAS

The land lay hot beneath the woman's feet,

A rock-strewn desert which the morning sun

Had painted with a glorious deceit

To vanish ere the day was well begun.

She searched with weary eyes for some small place

Of shelter where her fainting child might lie

Protected from the heat. She found a space

Beneath a stunted shrub; and lest he die

Before her eyes, she stumbled on away

To weep in bitterness. But God looked down

And heard the weeping Hagar on that day,

Crouched there upon the desert bleak and brown.

And in the waters of a desert well

He showed his love for her—and Ishmael.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Eli's Sons. 1 Sam. 2:27-36

T.—Samuel's Call. 1 Sam. 3

W.—Eli's Death. 1 Sam. 4:1-18

T.—The Ark. 1 Sam. 6:1-16

F.—Ebenezer. 1 Sam. 7:5-13

S.—Abraham's Practice of Brotherhood. Gen. 13:1-12

S.—Saul. 1 Sam. 9:15-27

God's Promise of a Nation

Genesis 17:1-10

Explained in Daily Reading for Monday

Memory Selection: I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. Genesis 17:7.

MONDAY, JULY 23

God's Covenant with His People—Genesis 17:1-10

1 *And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

2 *And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.*

3 *And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,*

4 *As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.*

5 *Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.*

6 *And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.*

7 *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*

8 *And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

9 ¶ *And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.*

10 *This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.*

When Abraham first came to Bethel in the land of Canaan, God appeared to him and made promises to him concerning the land and concerning his descendants. During the years God had appeared to Abram on two other occasions. Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old God appeared to

him again and renewed his promises to him. Abram's name was changed to Abraham. Abram means exalted father. Abraham means father of a multitude. God promised Abraham that he would give to Sarah and him a son and that he would multiply his descendants and that they would be a blessing to all mankind. God promised to give to them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. He promised to be their God. Abraham and his descendants were to keep the covenant with God to serve him throughout all generations. Circumcision was to be the sign of the covenant.

✠ We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that thou didst bless Abraham and the Hebrew nation. We thank thee for the covenant which thou didst make with thy people. We pray, our Father, that thou wilt bless our nation and grant that we shall keep the covenant which thou hast made with us, giving to thee our faith, our devotion, and our service. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, JULY 24

God's Covenant with Noah—Genesis 9:8-17

8 ¶ *And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,*

9 *And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;*

10 *And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.*

11 *And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.*

12 *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:*

13 *I do set my bow in the cloud, and it*

shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

17 And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

After Noah and the members of his family came forth from the ark, God said to Noah, "This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."

God's covenant with Noah is unique in that no obligations on the part of man are mentioned. God's promise gave encouragement and hope to Noah and it gives encouragement and hope to us.

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the rainbow and its message. Fill us with faith and hope and love as we serve thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

God's Covenant of Peace—Isaiah 54:7-10

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

God is a God of peace. God desires peace between man and God. He desires peace between man and man, and he has shown us the only way in which we may have peace. We are to repent of our sins, to trust God through Jesus Christ, and to live righteously through the strength which he gives unto us.

Peace is the outgrowth of righteousness and righteousness comes by faith. A faith in God and in his promises leading to a righteous life will enable one to be at peace with God and with his fellow man. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." We can trust God's promises. He wants us to be at peace with him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3).

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy covenant of peace. Help us to be at peace with thee. Help us to be at peace with the members of our families. Help us to be at peace with our fellow man. Grant unto us thy peace which passeth all understanding and which is able to keep our minds and hearts. Through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

THURSDAY, JULY 26

God's New Covenant—Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord:

for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The Jews broke the first covenant, but God promised that he would make a new covenant with them. He will put his law in their inward parts. He will write it in their hearts. He will be their God. They shall be his people. All will come to know God. He will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

God promised a new covenant. He has given a new covenant which we have in our possession. We call it the New Testament, recorded in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, setting forth God's love, Jesus' sacrifice, man's salvation, and man's duty. May its message be recorded in our minds and hearts. May we know that God is our God and may we be his people. May all come to know God and to experience forgiveness for their sins and salvation through Jesus Christ.

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the old covenant, and we thank thee for the new covenant. Help us to study thy Word and to hide thy Word in our hearts that we might not sin against thee. Through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

FRIDAY, JULY 27

God's Covenant Offered to All—Isaiah 55:1-5

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

God made covenants with individuals. He made a covenant with the people of Israel.

His covenant is offered to all. He that thirsteth is invited to come. He that is hungry is invited to come. He that is poor is invited to come.

This covenant is offered to everyone, to the various peoples and the nations of the earth. Whosoever will may come and all who believe may receive its blessing. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Have you accepted the provisions of this covenant? Do you believe? Have you come unto God through Jesus Christ? Have you experienced the salvation which Jesus came to bring? Hear and your soul shall live.

☉ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for thy love and mercy and grace. We thank thee that thy covenant is offered to all and no matter how terrible our sins may be or may have been, that we may come to thee in repentance and faith and find forgiveness, and no matter how poor or hungry or thirsty we may be, that we may come to thee and find satisfaction for our every need. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

SATURDAY, JULY 28

Man's Covenant with God—Joshua 24:22-28

22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

23 Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel.

24 And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26 ¶ And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.

27 And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

28 So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

Joshua was now an old man. He had led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, and had conquered the land and had divided it among the twelve tribes of Israel. He called the people together at Shechem for a meeting in which they were called to consecrate themselves anew to God.

The service of some god is inevitable. You have the privilege of choosing the god whom you will serve. But if you choose Jehovah, the true God, certain obligations rest upon you which you must fulfil. When the people said that they would serve Jehovah, Joshua seemed to detect a note of insincerity in their promise so he challenged them to put away their false gods, to live holy and righteous lives, to obey God's voice in all things. Joshua told them that Jehovah was a holy God, a jealous God, and that they must choose him voluntarily and serve him in sincerity and in truth.

☉ Our Father in heaven, help us to choose thee as our God, to choose Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, to make a covenant with thee, to love thee, to serve thee, and to try to live holy and righteous lives. Bless us as we try to win others to thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, JULY 29

God's Everlasting Covenant—Hebrews 13:20-21

20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work

LESSON FOR AUGUST 5

Isaac's Heritage

Genesis 24:10, 15-20, 34-36, 61-67

Explained in Daily Readings for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

Memory Selection: I have a goodly heritage. Psalm 16:b.

MONDAY, JULY 30

Abraham's Plan for Isaac—Genesis 24:1-9

1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The covenant sealed through the blood of Jesus Christ is an everlasting covenant. It will never be abolished. It will never be supplanted. It will never be changed. His words will not fall. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17).

Our Scripture reading today is a prayer to the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The prayer is that God will "make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we make the prayer of thy servant our prayer, praying that thou wilt have thine own way in our lives and in the lives of thy people everywhere. Through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Crowned. 1 Sam. 10:1-12

T.—Samuel's Farewell. 1 Sam. 12:1-5, 19-24

W.—Saul's Sin. 1 Sam. 15:1-14

T.—Saul Rejected. 1 Sam. 15:17-24

F.—David Anointed. 1 Sam. 16:1-13

S.—God's Promise of a Nation. Gen. 17:1-10

S.—David and Goliath. 1 Sam. 17:38-49

venture the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 ¶ The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

Abraham was much concerned that Isaac should not make a mistake in his marriage. He was interested in this because of his love of Isaac and because of his interest in his posterity. He called his trusted servant to him, told him the kind of wife he wanted to be chosen for his son Isaac, and made him pledge that he would choose as Abraham had directed.

Parents should not try to dictate the choice of a wife or husband for their son or daughter today, but certainly they should be interested in their son's and daughter's friends and associates and through affection, influence, and prayer help them to choose wisely. Sons and daughters should not choose wives or husbands without the knowledge and consent of their parents.

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the institution of the home with all of its beautiful and blessed associations. We thank thee that in thy mercy to man thou hast made a helpmeet for him, one who will share his joys and help him bear his burdens and sorrows. We pray that thou wilt guide every young man in the choice of a wife and every young woman in the choice of a husband, that love and peace and happiness shall abide in every home. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, JULY 31

The Servant's Prayer—Genesis 24:10-14

10 ¶ And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for

all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

12 And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

This servant whose name we do not know was trusted by his master, Abraham. He was a believer in God. Probably he had been won to faith in God by Abraham. He was a man of prayer. He prayed earnestly that God would guide him to the one whom he had chosen to be Isaac's wife. He did not want to make a mistake. In his prayer he mentioned a sign, saying, "Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may have a drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master." This was not an arbitrary sign. The person who acted in this way would be hospitable, courteous, kind, and considerate. She would possess qualifications that would be necessary in the building of a home.

How important is prayer in choosing a wife or a husband. How important is prayer in the building of a home. We are inspired by the prayer of this servant to pray more concerning these all-important matters.

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt bless the young men and the young women and the boys and the girls who are growing up in our homes. May they be trained in such a way that if they shall marry, they may possess the qualities

and qualifications which will enable them to build Christian homes. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1

The Servant Meets Rebekah—Genesis 24:15-20

15 ¶ And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

Soon after the servant had finished praying, Rebekah came to the well to draw water. She was the daughter of Bethuel and the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor. She was very fair to look upon. She was hospitable, courteous, kind and considerate. The servant asked for a drink of water. She gave him a drink, then offered to draw water for his camels. She was modest and dignified, kind to strangers and willing to do the work which it was her duty to do.

We learn from the later story that Rebekah was ambitious and aggressive, eager to have her own way. She failed in some respects, but she made Isaac a good wife, comforting him and making up for that which was lacking in him.

☛ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray thy blessing upon our homes, upon mother and father and all the children, upon our sons and daughters, and upon all who minister to our families. Grant that each one may seek to live for thee and to serve thee faithfully and well. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2

The Servant's Prayer Answered—Genesis 24:21-27

21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold:

23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord.

27 And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.

Some prayers are not answered for months and even years after they are offered. Some are answered within a very short time. The servant's prayer was answered almost immediately. As soon as he saw Rebekah, he felt that she was the one whom he was seeking, but he was not impulsive or impetuous. He wanted to be certain that she was the right one, that God had answered his prayer. He offered her gifts. He asked her name and her family. He asked if there were room in her father's house for him and his attendants to lodge. As Rebekah answered his questions, he knew that she was the right one, that his prayer had been answered. He bowed his head and gave thanks and glory to God. The servant had done his best. He had prayed, and God had directed him.

God answers prayer. He wants us to pray to him concerning everything. He will hear and answer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8).

☛ Our gracious Heavenly Father, thou who dost hear and answer prayer, we thank thee

for thy many blessings, and we offer our petitions unto thee, praying that thou wilt give to us that which we most need and that thou wilt guide us in making all decisions during this day and every day. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3

Rebekah Becomes Isaac's Wife—Genesis 24:61-67

61 ¶ And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country.

63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.

66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

The servant went to Rebekah's home. He made known his mission to Rebekah's father and brother. They believed that it was God's will. Rebekah was given the privilege of going or declining to go with Abraham's servant. She answered, "I will go." Rebekah and her nurse went with Abraham's servant and his men into the land of Canaan. When they came near to Abraham's home, Isaac, who had been meditating in the field at eventide, lifted up his eyes and saw them. As he drew near and Rebekah learned from the servant that this was the one who was to be her husband, she covered her face with a veil. The servant told Isaac all that he had done. Isaac was pleased. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

How beautiful and blessed is marriage when entered upon under the guidance of and in accord with the will of God.

☛ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the ever blessed and sacred ceremony of marriage where two hearts and lives become united in the sight of man and in the sight of God. Bless wives and husbands everywhere. Bless our home. Bless all the homes of our country and of the world. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

The Sons of Isaac—Genesis 25:27-34

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 ¶ And Jacob sod pottage; and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Unto Isaac and Rebekah were born two sons, Esau and Jacob. They were twins.

Esau was the older. He was a hairy person, a cunning hunter, a man of the field, a man who lived for the things of the present, who was eager to gratify his appetite, who possessed many good qualities yet did not possess that spiritual depth, stability of character, and confidence in God which were needed if he were to fulfil the part of Isaac's elder son. His treatment of his birthright is an indication of his character.

Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents. He possessed many bad qualities. He was a deceiver. He was overly ambitious and aggressive, not hesitating to take advantage of his brother or father or anyone else in order to gain what he wanted; but this man possessed something which his brother

Esau did not possess. He was of better moral fiber, and God was able to make out of him a saint. He possessed a deep spiritual nature. He valued the things of God. He looked to the future of his people, and he valued those things which would help in the building of a family and a nation.

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt guide mothers and fathers in the rearing of their children. Help us to bring up our sons and daughters in such a way that they may love each other and love thee, and may thy purpose for the life of each one be fulfilled. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

The Seed of the Righteous—Psalm 37:18-25

18 *The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever.*

19 *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

20 *But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.*

21 *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.*

22 *For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.*

23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.*

24 *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*

25 *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

Happy are the parents who have good children. Happy are the children who have good parents. Children who have righteous parents have a rich heritage. It is better to leave your children a good name than riches.

The Scripture lesson today emphasizes the fact that the upright have an eternal inheritance, that the righteous show mercy and are generous, that the righteous are not forsaken, and that their needs are supplied. The divine favor abides upon the righteous and upon the seed of the righteous.

☉ Our Heavenly Father, we pray that thou wilt accept our thanks for all of thy blessings, that thou wilt enable us to live righteous lives, that thou wilt give us this day our daily bread and supply the needs of all thy people everywhere. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Saul Jealous. 1 Sam. 18:1-12
T.—David Persecuted. 1 Sam. 19:8-18
W.—David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 20:1-16
T.—Saul Spared. 1 Sam. 24:1-12
F.—Spared Again. 1 Sam. 26:5-20
S.—Isaac's Heritage. Gen. 24:10, 15-20, 34-38, 61-67
S.—Witch of Endor. 1 Sam. 28:8-19

LESSON FOR AUGUST 12

Isaac's Testimony to God

Genesis 26:19-33

Explained in Daily Readings for Wednesday and Thursday

Memory Selection: Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. Psalm 72:18.

MONDAY, AUGUST 6

God's Covenant with Isaac—Genesis 26:1-5

1 *And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.*

2 *And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:*

3 *Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;*

4 *And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;*

5 *Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*

God promised to bless Isaac, to multiply his descendants, and to give the land to him and to his seed. God promised to keep the oath which he had made to Abraham and assured Isaac even as he had assured Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Isaac was blessed of God, not only because of God's love for him, but because of God's love for his father Abraham who had obeyed God's voice and kept his commandments.

☉ We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that as thou wast with our fathers, so thou art willing to be with us and bless us. We give thee thanks for our parents. We give thee thanks for the blessings which have come to us because of them. We give thee thanks for the blessings which thou art bestowing upon us. Grant that we may be faithful to thee and that our lives may show forth thy praise. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 7

God's Blessing upon Isaac—Genesis 26:12-17

12 *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.*

13 *And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:*

14 *For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.*

15 *For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.*

16 *And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.*

17 *And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.*

Isaac's crops brought forth a hundredfold, and he had great possessions of flocks and herds. It was natural that the Philistines in whose land he was dwelling should envy him. To stop the wells which Abraham his father had digged was an act of enmity and hostility, especially in that dry land. But instead of becoming angry with

the Philistines, Isaac tried to win them to friendship.

Isaac prospered, and he knew that he had prospered because God had blessed him. He was not like the rich fool described by Jesus in the parable recorded in Luke 12:16-21. This man took the credit to himself for his prosperity and thought that material prosperity would minister to all his needs including the needs of his soul. Isaac did not make any such mistake. He knew that his property had come from God, and he knew that he was utterly dependent upon God for the needs of the body and the needs of the soul.

☉ Our gracious Heavenly Father, help us to realize that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Help us to know that we are dependent upon thee for material prosperity and for spiritual growth. We thank thee for the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us, and we pray that we may be faithful stewards, giving to thee that which we should and using aright all that thou dost entrust to our care. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8

Isaac, a Lover of Peace—Genesis 26:18-22

18 *And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.*

19 *And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.*

20 *And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Eshek; because they strove with him.*

21 *And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.*

22 *And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.*

The herdsmen of Gerar strove for one well and then another. Isaac's servants gave up these two wells. Then he digged another well, and for this they did not strive. Isaac went a great distance in his

effort to keep peace. When we read the story of Isaac's treatment of the herdsmen of Gerar, our minds turn at once toward the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

"Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." Isaac was a lover of peace. We are lovers of peace, and it is our desire that peace should abide between man and God and between man and man.

We have heard the story of the little girl who told her mother that she had been a peace-maker that day. The mother asked her, "How?" The little girl answered, "I knew something bad about a person and did not tell." Certainly a good way to be peace-makers is to seek to prevent quarrels.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that we may be lovers of peace and that we may be peace-makers in a world where there is so much quarreling and strife. Grant that the peace of God may abide in our hearts and in our homes. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9

Isaac's Testimony to God—Genesis 26:26-33

26 ¶ Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phicol the chief captain of his army.

27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

28 And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us have a covenant with thee;

29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the Lord.

30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

33 And he called it Shebah: therefore, the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day.

Isaac's religious life made a deep impression upon Abimelech and those associated with him. They observed this man day by day and they saw that the Lord was with him. They desired to make a covenant with Isaac to pledge friendship and peace. They made an agreement or a covenant. They took an oath. Isaac made them a feast, and they did eat and drink and departed in peace. Isaac, through a beautiful religious life, had been a blessing to the men among whom he lived.

What impression does your life make upon the people who are associated with you? What is the gospel according to you? Do people take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus? Do they see Jesus living in you? Many people are kept out of church because they believe that certain church members are living hypocritical lives. Others are won to Christ and to church membership by a beautiful sincere Christian life. What kind of influence do you exert over the members of your family and your friends?

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, may we live in such a way that our lives may bear testimony to our faith in thee and our love for thee. Grant that we may be true witnesses of thy saving power, and may we succeed in leading people to thee that they might find peace with thee and with their fellow man. As much as in us lieth, help us to live peaceably with all men. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10

Witnessing to God's Goodness—Isaiah 63:7-9

7 ¶ I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

We know that God is good, but do we bear witness to God's goodness or do we

keep quiet and never mention what he has done for our souls? Some keep silent where the things of God are concerned. Some are prone to criticize and complain, but we rejoice that there are others who tell of God's love and mercy and grace and who seek to share with others the meaning of what God has done for them. Suppose others had not told us of God's goodness. Suppose we do not tell others of God's goodness. They will be poorer. We also will be poorer. Nothing helps the soul more than to proclaim those things which the person believes and has experienced.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for thy goodness. We thank thee for all the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us. We thank thee that thou art able and eager to save. We thank thee that thou hast given to thy children the privilege of bearing witness to thy goodness and of proclaiming thy saving message. Help us to be faithful evangelists. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 11

Praising God for Deliverance—Jeremiah 20:7-13

7 ¶ O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.

8 For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily.

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

10 ¶ For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

11 But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

12 But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause.

13 Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.

The prophet Jeremiah was faithful to God. He was faithful in proclaiming the message which God gave to him. Because of his faithfulness he suffered, he was persecuted, he was imprisoned. He was mistreated in many ways. He was tempted to doubt. He was tempted to complain. He was tempted to lose faith, but he realized that if he should deny his God his enemies would rejoice and feel that they had won the victory over him. He remained true to God and was able to sing unto the Lord and to praise him for delivering the soul of the poor from the hand of the evildoers.

We also may be called upon to suffer for the sake of our God. If so, let us remain true to God and endure our sufferings patiently and triumphantly.

We praise our God for deliverance from disease, from danger, from death, from sin with its power and its penalty.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we do thank thee for the deliverance which thou dost grant to thy servants who trust thee and serve thee. Help us to be faithful to thee no matter how difficult the way or how dark the path. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

A Call to Praise the Lord—Psalm 107:1-9

1 O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

The children of Israel had returned from the Exile and the psalmist was calling upon them to give thanks unto the Lord for his goodness, his mercy, and his wonderful works. They had been delivered from peril and calamity. They had been delivered from their enemies. They had been delivered from hunger and thirst. They had been delivered from their distresses and fears. Certainly they had occasion to give praise unto the Lord.

We also have experienced such deliverances. We experience an even greater deliverance in salvation, in redemption, in the deliverance of the soul from the power and penalty of sin. We truly should praise God. Let us praise him in our homes. Let us praise him in the churches today and every Lord's Day. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. . . . Oh that men would praise the

Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. We thank thee that we are not our own, that we are purchased with a price, the price of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We thank thee for those who told us the story of Jesus and his love, and we praise thee for all thy marvelous works to the children of men. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Saul's Suicide. 1 Sam. 31
T.—David's Lament. 2 Sam. 1:17-27
W.—King of Judah. 2 Sam. 3:1-11
Th.—Israel and Judah. 2 Sam. 5:1-10
F.—The Ark Brought. 2 Sam. 6:1-11
S.—Isaac's Testimony to God. Gen. 26:19-33
S.—The Temple Planned. 2 Sam. 7:1-17

LESSON FOR AUGUST 19

Jacob Realizes the Presence of God

Genesis 28:10-22

Explained in Daily Readings for Tuesday and Wednesday

Memory Selection: The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. Psalm 145:18.

MONDAY, AUGUST 13

Isaac Blesses Jacob—Genesis 28:1-5

1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

Jacob had already purchased Esau's birthright with a mess of pottage. He had deceived his father and thus had received the blessing which his father had planned to

give to Esau. Esau hated Jacob because of what he had done and he tried to kill him. Rebekah learned of Esau's plan and counseled Jacob to go to Haran to the home of Laban her brother. Rebekah also talked with Isaac, suggesting that it would be a good thing for Jacob to go to Haran to find a wife.

Isaac called Jacob to him and blessed him, telling him that he was not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan but that he was to go to Haran and marry the daughter of Laban. After giving Jacob directions about choosing a wife, Isaac said to Jacob, "God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee." Isaac still loved Jacob and cherished no ill will against him for his having deceived him. How beautiful it is to see a father bestow his blessing upon his son.

✠ Our Father in heaven, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we bow before thee praying that thou wilt be our God and the

God of our children, and may we and our descendants serve thee throughout all generations. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14

At Nighttime—Genesis 28:10-16

10 ¶ And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

16 ¶ And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.

It is always an important event when a young man leaves home. When Jacob left home he was thinking of the sins of the past. He was thinking also of his hopes and plans for the future. How fortunate it was that out under the starry heavens on that first night away from home he met God. When a young man leaves home today, what will his experiences be? Will he seek places of sin at nighttime, or will he seek God and find him? God can be found. He is ever near. There is a way from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven. Jesus said: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John 1:51).

✠ Our Father in heaven, we make this our prayer that we may be conscious of thy

presence, thy protecting care, thy plan and providence for our lives; and may we be drawn nearer to thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15

Jacob's Vow to God—Genesis 28:18-22

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

God had promised to be with Jacob, to keep him, to bring him back to this land, and to accomplish his purpose for his life. Jacob had vowed a vow saying that if God would do for him all that he had promised and also give him bread and raiment and would enable him to come back to his father's house in peace, then God would be his God, the pillar which he had erected would be God's house, and of all that God gave to him, he would give the tenth unto God.

Did Jacob keep his vow? We do not know. We find no reference to the fulfillment of the vow during the twenty years while he was dwelling in Haran. Jacob had found God, but he needed to grow in character. He did grow. He became Israel, the saint, and when Jacob and his family returned to Bethel many years later (Genesis 35:1-7) he was a completely changed man. Herein is a glorious evangel. Jacob the deceiver may become Israel the saint.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we pray that we shall make unto thee the vows which we should make and that we shall keep the vows which we make to thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 16

Walking in the Light—1 John 2:7-11

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

One dark night a few years ago I was going along a country road near my old home. The road was winding and it was necessary to cross a bridge over a ravine. When I came up the hill on the opposite side, I saw a light in the church on the hill. It was a welcome sight indeed, and I thought of how the world is struggling in darkness and how it needs the light of Jesus Christ.

We do not like to walk in the darkness. When we walk at night, we like to carry a light of some kind lest we stumble and fall, lest we lose our way. Yet strangely enough, there are some people, as John tells us, who love the darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil and who do not desire to come to the light lest their deeds should be reprov'd.

Why walk in spiritual darkness when we may walk in the light? Jesus Christ is the light of the world. We may come to him and receive light, lighting our candles and helping give light to a darkened world. If we walk in the light, we shall love God. We shall love our brother. We shall find blessedness and safety and peace.

Our gracious Heavenly Father, we pray that we shall come to Jesus Christ and let his light shine in our minds and hearts. We pray that we shall walk in the light. We pray that we shall help give spiritual light to a darkened world. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 17

Abiding in Christ—John 15:1-7

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

When the branch is severed from the vine, it withers and dies. When the branch abides in the vine, it flourishes, drawing its nourishment from the vine, living healthily and bearing fruit.

When the Christian is separated from Christ, he soon withers and dies as a Christian. He draws no nourishment. He bears no fruit.

We are expected to bear fruit. The branch which bears fruit is purged that it may bring forth more fruit. Are we fruit-bearing Christians? If not, it is because we do not abide in his love and his words do not abide in us. If we abide in his love and his words abide in us, we shall receive the blessings which we need and bring forth fruit unto his name's honor and glory. Jesus is the true vine. His Father and our Father is the husbandman.

Our Father in heaven, we pray that thou wilt help us to abide in Jesus Christ, not just one day of the week, not just at certain seasons of the year, but every day, every hour, every moment may we rest in his love; may we abide in him; may his words abide in us; and may we bear much fruit. For his name's honor and glory. Amen.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18

God, Our Deliverer—Psalm 34:1-7

1 I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

3 O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

The psalmist sought the Lord. The Lord heard him and delivered him from all his fears and saved him out of all his troubles. God can deliver us from our fears and save us out of our troubles. How often we are filled with worry and anxiety when we might come to God in calmness and confidence knowing that he cares for us.

The Lord will hear those who call upon him. The faces of those who look unto him become radiant. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Those who experience God's presence, protecting care, and deliverance rejoice and are glad, and those who hear of their experiences also rejoice.

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that when we seek thee and pray to thee that thou dost hear us, and that thou dost deliver us from our fears, that thou dost save us out of all our troubles. We thank thee for thy love and thy protecting care. Help us to taste and see that the Lord is good. Help us to join with others in worshipping thee and in exalting thy name. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19

God, Our Refuge—Psalm 46:1-7

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

7 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

In the Old Testament law, provision was made for cities of refuge where people might flee and find safety. Life for many people is very difficult. There are temptations, dangers, diseases, and sorrows. There are tumults, storms, threats, and wars. We need a refuge.

How glad we are that we have a refuge. How glad we are that we can say with the psalmist that God is our refuge, that he is our strength, that he is a very present help in time of trouble. God is a present help. He has helped people in the past. He will help people in the future. He helps people now. He will help us now.

The God of Jacob who did not leave Jacob but accomplished his purpose for his life, the God who helped him through all of the varied experiences of a troubled life, the God who was to him a refuge, is our refuge.

Our Father in heaven, thou art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. We trust in thee, believing that thou carest for us and that thou wilt comfort and sustain us. We know that the eternal God is our refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms. We know that as are our days, so shall our strength be. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—David's Sin. 2 Sam. 11:14-27
 T.—David Punished. 2 Sam. 12:1-20
 W.—David's Prayer for Pardon. Psalm 51
 F.—Absalom's Flight and Recall. 2 Sam. 14:1-24
 S.—David Fleeting. 2 Sam. 15:30 to 16:3
 S.—Jacob Realizes the Presence of God. Gen. 28:10-22
 S.—Absalom Slain. 2 Sam. 18:1-17

Jacob Adjusts Personal Relationships

Genesis 33:1-11, 17-20

Explained in Daily Readings for Tuesday and Wednesday

Memory Selection: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace. Romans 14:19.

MONDAY, AUGUST 20

Jacob Gets Right with God—Genesis 32:22-30

22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

24 ¶ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

26 And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

27 And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

28 And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

29 And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Jacob was on his way to meet his brother Esau whom he had wronged. His own life and the lives of his children were endangered because of the sins which he had committed twenty years ago. Jacob was conscious of his need of God. He needed to get right with God and to get right with his brother Esau. Jacob prayed through the night before he was to meet his brother Esau. He was left alone by the brook, and there wrestled with a man until the breaking of the day.

God had been wrestling with Jacob, seeking to make of him the type of man which he wanted him to be. Jacob had resisted

and was still resisting, but during that night the power of his resistance was broken and then he found himself clinging to God and beseeching his blessing. He received God's blessing. His name was changed from Jacob which means deceiver to Israel which means a prince with God. Jacob called the name of the place Peniel for he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." This message contains a glorious evangel. The sinner may see God. The sinner may become a saint.

¶ We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, that thou didst not leave Jacob until thou didst accomplish that which thou hadst spoken to him of. We thank thee for thy blessing upon him and for the remarkable change in his life and character which enabled him to be a blessing to his family and to humanity. Bless us, our Heavenly Father, and help each one of us to get right with thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21

Jacob Gets Right with Esau—Genesis 33:1-11

1 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids.

2 And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindmost.

3 And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

5 And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant.

6 Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves.

7 And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

8 And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.

9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob's conscience was troubling him. He was afraid. He was going to meet his brother Esau whom he had wronged, and he did not know what Esau's attitude would be. Jacob was happy when his brother received him with forgiveness, and Esau, whose character was not all that it should have been, sets us a noble example here in the forgiveness of one's brother.

How sad it is to see quarrels between brothers or quarrels between sisters or quarrels between brother and sister. Get right with your brother, get right with your sister. Get right with your God. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).

¶ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that it is possible for brothers who have been estranged to become reconciled. Keep us from becoming estranged from our loved ones, and if we are estranged from any loved one or friend, grant that we may forgive and that they may forgive and that a reconciliation may take place. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 22

True Brotherly Love—Genesis 33:12-17

12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overtake them one day, all the flock will die.

14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

16 ¶ So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). Brotherly love is beautiful and a blessed thing. How much help brothers can be to each other in encouraging each other, ministering to each other, and loving each other. Jesus uses the word "brother" in speaking of the relationship which should exist between man and man. We believe in the brotherhood of all believers. We pray for the day when the people of the world will treat each other as brothers because they know that all are the children of one Heavenly Father.

¶ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for our brothers and sisters and for the blessings which they have brought to us. Help Christians everywhere to walk together in brotherly love. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23

Frequent Forgiveness—Luke 17:1-4

1 Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 ¶ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Even in the best and happiest families there will be times when misunderstandings will occur. What shall be our attitude? We need a penitent spirit and a forgiving spirit. Jesus, in answering Simon Peter's question concerning the forgiveness of a brother, said, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). There is a need for frequent forgiveness on the part of brother, sister, father, mother, son, and daughter. The person who cherishes an unforgiving spirit makes life miserable for himself and for others.

* Our Heavenly Father, grant unto us that spirit which will enable us to seek forgiveness and that spirit which will enable us to forgive those who have wronged us. And help us to be willing to forgive not just once or twice, but as often as forgiveness is sincerely sought. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 24

God Forgives and We Forgive—Luke 11:1-4

1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

God forgives. This is one of the great teachings of the Bible. God forgives, and we should forgive.

In the Lord's Prayer is the petition "Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." We seek God's forgiveness because we need forgiveness, and if we expect God to forgive us, we also should forgive one another. Certainly the soul that has experienced forgiveness and understands its meaning will be eager to forgive.

A person told me one day that it was much easier for her to ask God to forgive her than it was to ask a friend to forgive

her. But we must both forgive and seek forgiveness.

* Our Father in heaven, help us to repent of our sins and to forgive others as thou hast forgiven us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25

Mutual Forgiveness—Ephesians 4:25-32

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil:

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

In our Scripture reading today many practical counsels are given. Put away lying. Speak every man the truth with his neighbor. Be angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Do not give place to the devil. Do not steal. Work that you might support yourself and those who are dependent upon you and that you might have something to give to him that is in need. Do not speak corrupt words but speak edifying words. Put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, malice. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by your indifference or sin. Kindness, consideration, and forgiveness are graces which minister to the happiness of any household or church.

* Our Father in heaven, help us to refrain from evil. Keep us from grieving the Holy Spirit of God. Help us so to live in our homes and in our churches that happiness may abide and thy name be glorified. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

Follow After Peace—Romans 14:13-19

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things where-with one may edify another.

In our Scripture reading today, Paul is discussing the question of eating meat

which had been sacrificed to idols. The meat itself was just like any other meat, but there were some who were caused to stumble because others partook of this meat. Paul counseled the stronger ones to deny themselves for the sake of their weaker brothers and not to place a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in a brother's way.

Try to keep from giving offense. Be kind, thoughtful, considerate. Be truthful, tactful, sincere, and charitable. Give no occasion to others to fall. Live in such a way that your good will not be evil spoken of.

* Our Father in heaven, help us to adjust our personal relationships in such a way that we shall manifest thy spirit toward all over whom we have influence. May thy name be glorified. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—David's Lament. 2 Sam. 18:24-33
T.—David's Praise 2 Sam. 22:1-20
W.—The Pestilence. 2 Sam. 24:10-25
T.—Gabriel's Message. Luke 1:8-38
F.—Birth of John. Luke 1:87-80
S.—Jacob Adjusts Personal Relationships. Gen. 33:1-11, 17-20
S.—Birth of Jesus. Luke 2:1-20

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 2

Joseph's Place in God's Plan

Genesis 39:20-23; 41:14-16, 25, 41-43
Explained in Daily Reading for Thursday

Memory Selection: Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings. Proverbs 22:29.

MONDAY, AUGUST 27

Joseph the Dreamer—Genesis 37:5-11

5 ¶ And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have a dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 ¶ And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I

have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

Joseph was the son of Jacob and his beloved wife, Rachel. Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children, and this love helped to make Joseph's brothers jealous and envious. Joseph dreamed two dreams and told these dreams to his brothers and his father. These dreams gave to them the idea that Joseph would have dominion

over them and that they would bow down before him.

It was well that Joseph dreamed dreams of the future. Perhaps he should have been more careful in telling his dreams when they involved other people, but he was true to his dreams, and his dreams eventually came true.

Every person should dream dreams of the future, thinking of what God would have him do and seeking to make the dreams come true. Do you know what God wants you to do in life? Boys and girls should seek early in life to know God's will and plan to make of life that which will serve mankind and bring glory to our God.

✠ We thank thee, our Heavenly Father, for the dreams of boys and girls and young men and young women, dreams of ideals, dreams of opportunities, dreams of service. Grant that all those dreams which are in accord with thy will shall come true. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28

Joseph Sold into Egypt—Genesis 37:25-28

25 *And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.*

26 *And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?*

27 *Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.*

28 *Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

It is surprising to see how far jealousy and envy will go. The "green-eyed monster" is a monster still, leading to hatred and sin in many forms.

Joseph's brothers saw him coming to the place where they were keeping their father's sheep. They talked of killing him and thus getting rid of him and his dreams. Reuben tried to keep them from committing this awful deed and suggested instead that they place him in a pit, thinking that he would come back later and rescue Joseph. But

while his brothers were eating bread and Reuben was not with them some Ishmaelites came by. Judah suggested to his brothers that they sell Joseph. They drew Joseph up out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and Joseph was carried down into Egypt. Reuben was distressed when he returned and found what had happened. Their father Jacob was grief-stricken and heartbroken when the sons told him falsely that they had found Joseph's coat of many colors all stained with blood and led their father to believe that an evil beast had killed Joseph.

Beware of jealousy and envy. Homes, churches, and even governments have been wrecked by jealousy and envy.

✠ Our Father in heaven, deliver us from jealousy and envy. Keep us from harming those who are better than ourselves as well as those who are worse than ourselves. Keep us from mistreating any brother. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29

God's Blessing upon Joseph—Genesis 39:1-6

1 *And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither.*

2 *And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

3 *And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.*

4 *And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.*

5 *And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.*

6 *And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.*

Doubtless Joseph was filled with grief and sorrow at being sold as a slave into a foreign country, but he resolved to make the

best of the situation. Perhaps he realized even then that God would overrule the evil deed for good.

Joseph was brought down to Egypt and was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard. God blessed Joseph and caused him to prosper. Soon Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph, and he made him overseer of his house. He put all that he had under Joseph's supervision. He trusted Joseph completely, and God caused Potiphar to prosper for Joseph's sake.

Joseph possessed qualities which cause a person to grow and prosper—faith, ability, honesty, purity, integrity. He was a good young man and God was with him.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for Joseph's beautiful life which has served as an inspiration to so many people. Grant that we may be true to thee at all times and under all conditions. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30

Joseph Exalted—Genesis 41:37-46

37 *¶ And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.*

38 *And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*

39 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:*

40 *Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

41 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.*

42 *And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;*

43 *And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.*

44 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.*

45 *And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife*

Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

46 *¶ And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Joseph did not stay in Potiphar's home very long before Potiphar's wife tried to persuade him to commit a terrible sin. Joseph refused to do this great wickedness and sin against God. Potiphar's wife told a falsehood about Joseph, and he was imprisoned, not because he had sinned but because he had refused to sin.

In the prison Joseph prospered even as he had in Potiphar's home. He interpreted the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker and later was called to interpret Pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh took Joseph's advice and appointed Joseph to be the ruler of Egypt, second only to himself. At the age of thirty Joseph was made ruler of Egypt, and he performed his duties faithfully, wisely, and well.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the reward of virtue which came to Joseph. We thank thee for his devotion to thee and for his success in the high office in which he served. Wherever we may be placed, in humble or in high station, grant that we may be faithful in thy service. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 31

Loyalty to God—Daniel 3:13-18

13 *¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king.*

14 *Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?*

15 *Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?*

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Nebuchadnezzar the king gave a command that all the people in Israel should worship the golden image which he had set up. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who served the true God refused to bow down and worship the golden image. They were brought before the king, who gave them an opportunity to fall down and worship and told them that if they did not do so he would cast them into the fiery furnace. But these three were loyal to their God and continued in their refusal to worship the golden image. The king became very angry, commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual, and had them cast into it. But to his amazement they suffered no harm.

Daniel and his three friends and many others have given to us inspiring examples of loyalty to God. We must be loyal to our God no matter what the cost or consequences may be.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy servants who have been loyal to thee. Help us to be loyal at all times, doing all within our power to serve thee faithfully and well. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Standing for the Right—Acts 4:13-20

13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle

hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate of the Temple. The members of the Sanhedrin could not deny this, but they wanted to keep Peter and John from telling what they had done and how it had been done. They threatened them and commanded them not to speak any more or teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John believed that they must obey God rather than man. They could not keep from speaking the things which they had seen and heard.

* Our Father in heaven, help us always to stand for the right in the home, in the school, in the shop, in the office, on the farm, in the church, wherever we may be. Help us to be true to Jesus Christ. May we so live that others will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Jehovah, Our Strength—Isaiah 12:1-6

1 And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5 Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done

excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

When we think of our weakness, our dependence, our need, we say with Isalah, "God is my salvation, my strength, my song." Isalah was praising God for what God meant to him. We should praise, adore, and worship our God, declare his doings among the people, and proclaim his goodness and greatness.

God is our strength because he is our salvation. When we experience salvation through him, he will become our song, filling our souls with singing and rejoicing. We need strength. God is strong and is eager and able to impart his strength unto

us. Christians should be strong to overcome temptation, strong to stand for the right, strong to do their duty.

* Our Heavenly Father, thou art our salvation, our strength, our song. Help us to realize and acknowledge our weakness and our dependence upon thee. Give unto us the strength which we need for our daily work and our Christian service. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Jesus the Boy. Luke 2:40-52
T.—Christ's Early Ministry. Luke 4:1-20
W.—Working in Galilee. Luke 4:31-44
Th.—Miracles Wrought. Luke 5:12-26
F.—Apostles Chosen. Luke 6:12-26
S.—Joseph's Place in God's Plan. Gen. 39:20-23; 41:14-16, 41-43
S.—The Dead Raised. Luke 7:1-17

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 9

Egypt's Part in God's Plan

Genesis 41:46-57

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Tuesday

Memory Selection: He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. Psalm 111:5.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Joseph, the Wise Overseer—Genesis 41:46-49

46 ¶ And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

Joseph, by his training in his home and by his experience in Potiphar's house and in prison, was prepared to be an overseer. When Pharaoh chose him to have supervision over the agriculture of the land of Egypt, he must have had confidence in his ability. Joseph did not disappoint Pharaoh. During the seven years of plenty the land produced abundant crops. Joseph gathered

up the food and laid it up in the cities in preparation for the day when famine would come.

We can learn a lesson from the ant, the bee, and the squirrel in storing up food during the summer for the winter. It is not wise to waste or to destroy any food, and in the time of abundance it is wise to prepare for the time when food may not be so abundant. How wise was Joseph in his day. How fortunate is the nation which has a man like Joseph to oversee the production of food and to prepare for the future. We remember the words spoken by Jesus after he had multiplied the loaves and the fishes and had fed the five thousand, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6:12).

* Our Father in heaven, keep us from wasting or destroying the food which thou hast provided for us. Help us to prepare for the winter or for time of famine and grant that we may always be willing to share with others in our country and in other countries that which thou hast given unto us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Joseph, the Good Administrator—Genesis 41:53-57
53 ¶ And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

Joseph was just as eager to distribute the grain as he had been to gather it into storehouses. Some people do not wish to use what they have saved for the purpose for which they have saved it, even when the time has come. They want to hold on to all that they have saved. But Joseph was just as eager to use the grain in the time of need as he had been to save it in the time of plenty.

Joseph was wise in distributing the grain. The problem of supply and demand and distribution is one of the most important problems facing the people of the world. During the war, rationing has helped to bring about a more equitable distribution of food. We do not know what programs or plans may be proposed for future action, but certainly it is our desire that the food which God has given to us may be distributed so that all may have enough. God has provided food enough and to spare.

* We pray, our Heavenly Father, that thou wilt raise up good administrators in our country and in the other countries of the world to carry out thy will in distributing the food which thou hast provided to all who are hungry and in need. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Joseph Meets His Brothers—Genesis 42:1-8

1 Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

3 ¶ And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth.

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

When Jacob's ten sons came to buy grain, Joseph saw them and recognized them. Joseph knew them, but they did not know him. They had not expected to find their brother in such a position. As they bowed before Joseph, he remembered the dream which he had had several years before. They told him that they had come to buy grain. Joseph resolved to put them to a very severe test to see if they still possessed the same spirit which they had when they sold him as a slave. Joseph was wise as well as charitable and forgiving in his treatment of his Brothers. He inquired about their family. Then he accused them of being spies, but gave to them an opportunity to prove that they were honest and true men. What must have been the feelings of Joseph when he saw his brothers and realized that he was able to help them and to save them and his father from hunger and starvation.

* Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the life of Joseph and for the inspiration and strength which we receive from reading the story of his life and meditating upon what he said and did. Help us to be inspired by his example, to be faithful to thee, and to be wise, charitable, and forgiving toward our fellow man. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Joseph Provides Food for His Brothers—Genesis 42:18-25

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God:

19 If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses:

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

21 ¶ And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.

23 And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 ¶ Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.

Joseph accused his brothers of being spies. He put them all together in the ward for three days. On the third day Joseph made a proposal to them that they leave one of their number bound as a hostage while they returned home and brought back their youngest brother. They decided to accept his proposal, and Simeon was bound and left as a hostage.

The brothers were troubled in conscience, and they thought of their treatment of Joseph and how they had been guilty concerning their brother. They felt that this distress had come upon them because of their sin when they saw the anguish of Joseph's soul and refused to hear his pleas and entreaties. They did not know that Joseph understood what they were saying, but he did and it caused him to weep.

He commanded that corn be given to them and that each man's money be placed in the sack with the corn. Joseph had them

in his power. He could do as he chose to do. He chose to provide food for their needs and to follow a course which would lead them to realize their sin and seek forgiveness.

* Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for our daily bread. We thank thee that thou dost make provision for all the needs of the soul. Help us to look unto thee in gratitude and thanksgiving for all thy mercies. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

God's Care for All—Matthew 6:25-34

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Our Scripture reading today is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus counsels us against worldly fears and anxieties. He counsels us against giving too much thought to the things which minister to the body and too little thought to the things which minister to the soul.

God knows that we need certain things, and he has provided them in abundance. We see the marvelous providence of God in nature in multiplying and providing food enough for all. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy care for the birds and the flowers, and we thank thee for thy care for thy children. We are grateful for the provision which thou hast made for us, and we pray that we may seek first thy kingdom and thy righteousness. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Spiritual Food for All—Isaiah 55:1-5

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

God has provided salvation for all who will accept it. He offers spiritual food to everyone. No one else has to be deprived of spiritual food in order that you shall have it. No one else has to be lost because you or I receive salvation. God's grace is sufficient to save all who come unto him in faith through Jesus Christ.

No one has to take away from someone else the privilege of being saved in order to experience salvation. But instead, if you experience salvation, you will make it easier for someone else to experience it and you will seek to make available to others that which means so much to you.

There is spiritual food for all. Let us all partake of this food. Let us hunger and

thirst after righteousness, and we shall be filled and well nourished.

* Our Father in heaven, grant that we shall taste and see that the Lord is good. Grant that we shall partake of the spiritual food which thou hast provided, ever feeding our souls upon the Bread of Life, and help us to help make available to all people everywhere the spiritual food which thou hast provided in abundance. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Praise for God's Goodness—Psalm 111

1 Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

2 The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3 His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands are verily and judgment; all his commandments are sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and revered is his name.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

We pray to the Lord to "give us this day our daily bread." Do we thank him for the bread which he has given? Certainly we should return thanks every day at meal-time and at other times, recognizing that God has provided our bread and meat. We are to join with the psalmist in praising God for his righteousness, his grace, his compassion. We are to praise him for redemption and for the covenant which he has made with his people. We are to praise him because his commandments are sure and steadfast. We are to praise him in the home, in the church, and everywhere for his goodness to others and to us.

* Our Father in heaven, help us on this Lord's Day in the home, the Sunday school, the Training Union, and the church to praise thee for thy goodness. Help us ever to thank thee for the food which thou hast provided and to express our gratitude for all the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Jesus Anointed. Luke 7:36-50
- T.—Demoniac Healed. Luke 8:26-39
- W.—Jairus' Daughter Raised. Luke 8:40-56
- T.—Five Thousand Fed. Luke 9:1-17
- F.—Transfiguration. Luke 9:28-43
- S.—Egypt's Part in God's Plan. Gen. 41:46-57
- S.—Disciples Rebuked. Luke 9:46-62

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 16

Judah's Concern for His Family

Genesis 44:18-34

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Tuesday

Memory Selection: How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?
Genesis 44:34.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Judah's Plea for Benjamin—Genesis 44:18-29

18 ¶ Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: for our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.

27 And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: 28 And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:

29 And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Judah had changed greatly since he proposed selling Joseph as a slave. There was much in Judah's early life that was deplorable, but here he rises to the heights and gives promise of becoming that which he did become.

Judah knew how his father Jacob loved Benjamin, but this did not fill him with jealousy now. It simply made him more eager to have Benjamin return to his grief-stricken father. Judah knew that Jacob loved Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Rachel, more than he loved his other sons, but he understood. His address was respectful, truthful, and appealing.

* Our gracious Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the love which a brother may have for his brother. We thank thee for the love which Judah had for Benjamin and the love which he had for their father Jacob. We thank thee for his noble appeal on behalf of his brother Benjamin, and we pray that we shall ever be willing to make sacrifices for the sake of our brothers. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Page Fifty-three

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Judah Offers Himself a Substitute—Genesis 44:30-34

30 Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life;

31 It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

32 For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Judah had promised his father Jacob that he would be surety for the return of his brother Benjamin and that if he did not bring him back that he would bear the blame forever. Judah offered to be a bondman in place of Benjamin and was willing to remain in Egypt as a bondman if his brother Benjamin was permitted to return home to his father. Judah's offer went as far as love could go. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah. Judah offered himself as a substitute for Benjamin. Jesus offered himself as a substitute for every sinner who would trust him and accept him.

Judah's question "For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?" prompts us to ask "How shall I go up to my Heavenly Father if the lad be not with me?" This question should be asked by parents, teachers, pastors, deacons, brothers, sisters, friends. Let us be certain that we carry the lads and the lasses with us when we go to meet our Heavenly Father.

✠ Our Father in heaven, give us a love for all the members of our family and for all with whom we are associated that will lead us to tell them the story of Jesus and his love. Guide us as we try to persuade them to become Christians, accepting as their substitute our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Dishonoring Parents—Mark 7:1-13

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Parents care for their children during the days of infancy and childhood, young manhood and young womanhood, and seek to prepare them for the experiences and duties of life. Children should love their parents, obey them, and provide for them when they are in need.

Jesus condemned the practice of some of the scribes and Pharisees in using religion as an excuse for their failure to take care of their parents. They would say that that which they possessed was Corban; that is, that it was consecrated to God. They might not actually use it for God, but this custom of consecration would keep them from having to use it to take care of their parents.

What a sad thing it is to see prosperous sons and daughters seek to shirk the responsibility of helping their needy parents. One of the saddest sights that I ever witnessed was that of a man driving around in his expensive car while his mother was in the poorhouse. In contrast to this, I know of a poor young man who left the country and secured a job in the city. He saved all that he could save and used his savings to purchase a little house and five

acres of ground in the country for his mother and father who were growing old.

✠ Our gracious Heavenly Father, help us to honor and to obey our parents and to help provide for their needs as we have opportunity. We thank thee for mother and father and for all that they have meant to us. Bless them and minister unto their needs. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Rules for the Family—I John 2:12-14

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

The family is a divine institution. Certainly every Christian will do all within his power to help strengthen the ties which bind families together and always to be kind to his kindred even as Joseph was kind to his kindred.

Love is the foundation of the home. Love will lead to unselfishness, to kindness, courtesy, and considerateness. Love will give to each member of the family an interest in the other members of the family, a desire to encourage them in their undertakings and to sympathize with them in their failures and disappointments. Love on the part of the parents will lead them to teach their children, to discipline them, to exercise authority, and to expect obedience. Love will lead to an effort to secure knowledge and strength. Love will lead to the teaching of the Bible and to prayer and to the effort to win every member of the family to Jesus Christ and to help all to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the institution of the home. Grant that in our daily living, in our church life, and everywhere we shall do all that we can to preserve the sanctity of the home and the

sacredness of the family. Bless the families of our country and of every country. Bless our family. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Parental Duties—Deuteronomy 31:9-13

9 ¶ And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests and sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel.

10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles.

11 When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

12 Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:

13 And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

Those who are to be parents should properly prepare themselves for marriage and for the coming of children. Parents provide shelter, home, food, clothing, medical care, education, training, and discipline for their children. Parents should place great emphasis upon religious instruction and training. Many parents neglect to do this today, but it cannot be neglected without peril to the child and to the home.

It is the duty of the parents to seek to lead exemplary lives before their children, learning that which is right, doing that which is right, and teaching that which is right, ever seeking to encourage, challenge, and inspire their children to worth-while undertakings and accomplishments. Do all that you can that your children may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God. In teaching it may be necessary to give "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:13), but such effort will bring a rich reward.

✠ Grant, our Father, that we shall not fail as parents. Grant that our children shall grow up to love thee and serve thee. Grant

that parents everywhere shall seek to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Practical Helpfulness—James 2:14-18

14 *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*

15 *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,*

16 *And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*

17 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

18 *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

James believed that people who had faith in God would show their faith by deeds of practical helpfulness. There is always the opportunity for the members of a family to help each other, and how nobly some members of the family do help. A certain young man stayed at home and worked to support the family so that his brother might go to college and study for the ministry. Many sons and daughters have taken loving care of invalid mothers or fathers over a period of many years. Such willing service is the fruit of one's faith in God.

Certainly a church should seek to be helpful in every way. There is a place in every church not only for personal ministry to those who may be in need, but for an adequate fellowship fund which will be administered properly in meeting the needs of the members and others who need food, clothing, shelter, fuel, medical supplies, and other necessities. Let us do deeds of kindness and helpfulness whenever we have the opportunity.

✠ Our Father in heaven, help us to minister in a practical way to the needs of the people round about us, and help us to try to minister to their chief need in seeking to give to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. For we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Love is of God—1 John 4:7-13

7 *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*

8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

9 *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

10 *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

12 *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

13 *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

God is love. Love proceeds from God. Throughout the Bible we have the story of God's great love for man. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We love him because he first loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The first great commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). The second is "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (v. 31); Jesus gave to his disciples a new commandment, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12). We marvel at the matchless love of God, and we desire that his love shall fill our hearts and lead us to love even as Jesus loved.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for thy great love for us. We pray that we shall ever manifest in our dealings with others the love and compassion which we have received from thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

M.—Seventy Sent Out. Luke 10:1-16
T.—Good Samaritan. Luke 10:26-37
W.—Teaching to Pray. Luke 11:1-13
T.—Pharisees Denounced. Luke 12:1-12
F.—True Treasure. Luke 12:22-34
S.—Judah's Concern for His Family. Gen. 44:18-34
S.—Lost Sheep and Coin. Luke 15:1-10

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 23

Joseph's Testimony to God's Providence

Genesis 45:1-5, 9-15

Explained in Daily Readings for Monday and Tuesday

Memory Selection: Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Psalm 107:8.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Joseph's Testimony to God's Providence—Genesis 45:1-5

1 *Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.*

2 *And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.*

3 *And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.*

4 *And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.*

5 *Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*

There are few stories which are more moving than the story of Joseph making himself known to his brethren. He asked all of his attendants and servants to leave. His heart was overflowing with emotion. Naturally his brothers who had sinned against him were conscience-stricken and silent when they learned that this ruler was their brother Joseph. They were troubled at his presence, but Joseph soon set them at ease by calling them to come near to him and telling them that God had overruled their evil for good. The words which he spoke to them show that he had an implicit faith in God and that he possessed a forgiving nature. He saw the providence of God in his own experience and bore testimony to what God's providence had meant to him and his people.

We are reminded of the words of the apostle Paul, "That the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel!" (Phil. 1:12).

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that thy loving providence. We believe that each individual is precious in thy sight and that thou dost have a purpose for every life. Work out thy purpose and plan in our lives. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Joseph Sends for His Father—Genesis 45:9-15

9 *Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:*

10 *And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast:*

11 *And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.*

12 *And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.*

13 *And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.*

14 *And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.*

15 *Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.*

The first question which Joseph asked of his brothers after he made himself known to them was "Doth my father yet live?" Jacob loved Joseph, and Joseph loved his father Jacob. It was his desire that his father should come down into Egypt and dwell in the land of Goshen so that Joseph might see him often and nourish him and his loved ones.

Someone may ask why Joseph had not communicated with his father during the

years that he had been in Egypt. We may be certain that it was not because of any lack of love or care, but rather it was in the divine plan to help bring his brethren to repentance and to make provision for their needs and the needs of his father Jacob.

Joseph was now the ruler of Egypt, but he was not ashamed of his father Jacob, and his invitation to his father included all the members of the family. Joseph kissed his brother Benjamin, and he kissed all his brethren and forgave them for the sin which they had committed against him. Joseph's kindness to his kindred has been an inspiration through the centuries.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that Joseph forgave his brethren and that Joseph manifested his love for his father by wanting him to be near him and by nourishing him and his children and grandchildren. Strengthen the ties which bind families together. Bless our own family. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

God's Providence for Israel—Deuteronomy 2:1-7

1 *Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the Lord spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.*

2 *And the Lord spake unto me, saying,*

3 *Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.*

4 *And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore:*

5 *Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.*

6 *Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.*

7 *For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.*

Our Scripture lesson today tells how God had cared for the descendants of Jacob during their experiences in the wilderness un-

der the leadership of Moses. He had given them food to eat. He had given them manna, quail, and water. They had lacked nothing.

God's providence for Israel is manifest throughout the Bible. They were his chosen people. They were given a home by God. They were cared for by God. They were to obey God. As God's chosen people they were to be a blessing, to receive his message, to give his message to mankind, and to be the race from which the Messiah would come. What a blessed thing it is to be able to see God's providence in the life of a people, in the life of a nation.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon Israel and for the blessings which we have received from Israel. We thank thee for thy providence in the history of our country. Thou hast been our help in ages past; thou art our hope for years to come. Guide our nation and guide us aright. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

God's Providence for Elijah—1 Kings 17:1-6

1 *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*

2 *And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,*

3 *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*

4 *And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*

5 *So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.*

6 *And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.*

The prophet Elijah is one of the most picturesque and interesting characters of the Old Testament. He was devoted to his God and did not hesitate to proclaim God's message. Queen Jezebel had introduced the worship of idols and King Ahab seemed to be willing or else was compelled to let his wife have her way. Elijah stood before Ahab and said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not

be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." God, by sending a drought, would bring the people to their senses.

It was necessary for Elijah to flee for his life. At God's command he hid himself by the brook Cherith where the ravens commanded by God brought him bread and flesh in the morning and in the evening. God was able to use the ravens to feed his prophet. God has many marvelous ways of providing for his people.

The story of the way food was provided for Captain Rickenbacker and his men when they spent twenty-two days on life rafts on the Pacific gives a modern illustration of the means which God may use to provide for those who place their trust in him.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that we can see thy providence not only in the life of a nation but in the life of an individual. We thank thee that we can see thy providence not only over long periods of time but day by day as thou dost provide for the needs of those who trust in thee. Help us to trust thee implicitly. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

God's Providence for the Multitude—Matthew 14:13-21

13 ¶ *When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.*

14 *And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*

15 ¶ *And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.*

16 *But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

17 *And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.*

18 *He said, Bring them hither to me.*

19 *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.*

20 *And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.*

21 *And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.*

Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitude of people who were gathered before him. He healed their sick. They were hungry, and Jesus wanted to give them food. The disciples wanted to send the multitude away, but Jesus said unto them, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." Jesus had more compassion for the multitude than his disciples had. He had more compassion for the multitude than we have.

Jesus, when tempted by Satan to use his power to change stones into bread, refused to do so, but here he used his miraculous power for the benefit of the multitude. Jesus still provides food for the multitudes, both material food and spiritual food. Let us, as his followers and his disciples, seek to distribute that which he provides. This providence for the multitudes includes loving, sustaining, healing, teaching, and saving care.

✠ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for thy providence for the multitude. We thank thee that we are included in thy providence. Continue to give unto us that which we need, and help us to serve thee and our fellow man. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

God's Protecting Providence—Isaiah 41:8-14

8 *But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*

9 *Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.*

10 ¶ *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

11 *Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.*

12 *Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.*

13 For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

God's protecting providence has been round about his chosen people from the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. God's protecting providence can be seen in the history of the life of our country. God has protected us from our enemies and has provided here a home for us where we may worship according to the teachings of his word. God's protecting providence is seen in the life of an individual as well as in the life of a nation. Perhaps each one of us could relate some story from his personal experience that would give evidence of God's protecting providence in keeping his children from disease, from danger, from accident, from enemies, from sin. If we will trust in him, he will hold us by our right hand and keep us from falling and will deliver us from fear.

☩ Our Father in heaven, may thy protecting love and care be round about us, about our loved ones, and about thy people everywhere. Hold us by the hand and lead us on. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Trusting in God's Providence—Psalm 91:1-11

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in

darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

This is a beautiful psalm of trust and confidence. It has brought comfort and inspiration to many lives. It is a blessed thing to dwell in the secret place of the Most High and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, to know that he is our refuge and our fortress, that we need not be afraid by day or by night, that we need not fear pestilence or destruction, that no evil will befall us nor any plague come nigh our dwelling, that he shall deliver us from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence.

God's providence is real. His providence is kind and good. His providence can be trusted. Do we trust in God to provide all that we need? An implicit trust in him will remove fear, anxiety and worry. Let us dwell in the secret place of the Most High. Let us abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

☩ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that thy providence can be trusted and that we can trust in thy providence. Give unto us, our families, our churches, and our country that which thou seest we most need and unto thee shall we give the praise and the glory. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS

For Individual Devotions

- M.—Lost Son. Luke 15:11-32
- T.—Shrewd Steward. Luke 16:1-13
- W.—Ten Lepers. Luke 17:5-19
- T.—The Publican's Prayer. Luke 18:9-17
- F.—The Found. Luke 19:11-27
- S.—Joseph's Testimony to God's Providence. Gen. 45:1-5, 9-15
- S.—Triumphal Entry. Luke 19:29-40

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 30

The Israelites in a Foreign Land

Genesis 47:1-12

Explained in Daily Readings for Wednesday and Thursday

Memory Selection: Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Psalm 90:1.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

God's Promise to Jacob—Genesis 46:1-7

1 And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifice unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

3 And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:

7 His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

When Jacob's sons returned from Egypt and told him that Joseph was alive, that he was ruler over all of the land of Egypt, and that Joseph had sent for him and his family to come into Egypt to live, Jacob's heart fainted. He could hardly believe the story, but when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him into Egypt, the spirit of Jacob revived, and he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (Gen. 45:28).

Jacob appreciated Joseph's invitation to come down into the land of Egypt, but as he thought of leaving the land which God had promised to him, he hesitated to go. He did not wish to leave the Promised Land to go down into Egypt without the divine command or approval. But God appeared

to Jacob and said to him, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again." Jacob obeyed, and he went down into Egypt. God fulfilled his promise. He did make of Jacob's descendants a great nation, but it was about four hundred years before they returned to the Promised Land.

☩ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for all of thy promises. We know that all of them will be fulfilled. We know that some of thy promises are fulfilled at an early date. We know that others may not be fulfilled for a long time, but help us always to trust and to obey. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Joseph and His Father Meet—Genesis 46:28-34

28 ¶ And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.

31 And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me;

32 And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?

34 That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers:

that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

It was a time of rejoicing, a time of weeping for joy when Joseph and Jacob met again. It had been probably twenty-two years since the day that Jacob had last seen Joseph, when Joseph left home to go to see his brothers who were tending the sheep. Now they met each other in Goshen. Joseph came to Goshen to see his father, and when Jacob saw him he felt that life's climax had been reached, and Israel said to Joseph "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." It is an occasion of rejoicing when two loved ones meet after a long separation. How great was the joy of Jacob and of Joseph on this occasion.

But there is a joy even greater than this, and that is the joy in the Father's heart when a prodigal son returns home. It is always a joyous occasion when any person meets his Heavenly Father. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

✦ Our Father in heaven, we thank thee that Jacob had the joy of seeing his son Joseph after their long separation. We thank thee for the return of loved ones from whom we have been separated for some time. We thank thee for the joy that comes when a soul returns to God. Grant that all may return unto thee and find forgiveness and blessedness. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Pharaoh Welcomes Jacob—Genesis 47:1-7

1 Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen.

2 And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.

4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Ca-

naan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:

6 The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Joseph was not ashamed to present his father unto Pharaoh. In fact he rejoiced in the privilege, and be it said to the credit of Pharaoh, he was glad to welcome Jacob for Joseph's sake.

Five of Joseph's brothers were presented unto Pharaoh. Joseph had told them what to say. They told Pharaoh that they were shepherds and requested the privilege of living in the land of Goshen. Pharaoh was kind in giving to them that privilege, letting them dwell in the best of the land, and he even offered positions as rulers over his cattle to any of Joseph's brothers who were capable of filling this position.

Any boy or girl reading the story of Joseph's treatment of his father will rejoice in the privilege of bestowing every possible honor upon father and mother and will never act in such a way as to bring them disappointment, heartache, or sorrow.

✦ We pray, our Heavenly Father, that thou wilt bless our fathers and mothers and that thou wilt enable children everywhere to honor their fathers and mothers. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Jacob Blesses Pharaoh—Genesis 47:8-12

8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?

9 And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11 ¶ And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

It was Jacob who blessed Pharaoh, not Pharaoh who blessed Jacob. "The less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7). Jacob was greater than Pharaoh. We are still being blessed by the life of Jacob. Pharaoh asked Jacob, "How old art thou?" This question was a mark of respect. Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." In connection with these words, we think of other words spoken by Jacob when he blessed Joseph and spoke of "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil" (Gen. 48:15-16). In these latter words Jacob was thinking more of God's blessing upon his life than he was when he appeared before Pharaoh.

God had blessed Jacob and even though his days had been filled with evil and sorrow, Jacob had been a blessing. The men of God should be a blessing to the world.

✦ Our Father in heaven, we pray that thou wilt bless thy servants, thy ministers, and thy prophets that they may truly serve thee and that they may be a blessing to mankind. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Joseph Comforts His Brethren—Genesis 50:15-21

15 ¶ And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass

of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

Joseph had forgiven his brothers seventeen years earlier, but they had not experienced the full joy of being forgiven because they had thought that Joseph had forgiven them for their father's sake, and now that their father Jacob was dead that he would requite them for the evil which they had done unto Joseph. Joseph was grieved when he saw how they had misunderstood and how they had failed to trust in his goodness and forgiveness. "Oh, what peace we often forfeit" by not believing in God's promises of forgiveness. Joseph wept when his brothers made their appeal unto him. They fell down before him in humility and offered to be his servants. Joseph counseled them not to fear, saying, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." God had overruled their evil deed and had saved his people from famine and want.

They thought evil against Joseph and sold him into slavery, but God meant it unto good. Men thought evil against Jesus Christ and crucified him, but God meant it unto good, unto the saving of mankind.

✦ Our Father in heaven, help us to experience the blessedness of forgiveness through trusting in Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer. Help us to see that thou dost mean all that thou dost do for good, and may we know that all things work together for good to them that love thee, to those who are the called according to thy purpose. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Triumphs of Faith—Hebrews 11:17-22

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received

the promises offered up his only begotten son,

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

In the studies of this quarter we have thought a great deal of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, heroes of faith, men who have blessed all mankind. The author of Hebrews in giving his catalogue of the heroes of faith of the Old Testament gave a large place to these four men. Abraham's offering of Isaac, Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau, Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons, and Joseph's dying belief in the future of his people and in their return to the Promised Land are all given as examples of heroic faith. Joseph had lived in Egypt but was not of Egypt. His body was there but his heart was in Canaan. He worshiped the true God even as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had done.

These four were giants. How were they able to be what they were and to do what they did? It was through faith in God, an implicit faith, an unconquerable faith. Lord, increase our faith.

* "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6:24-26).

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Jehovah, Our Dwelling Place—Psalm 90:1-12

1 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are

but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph is our God. He is the eternal God. He is the dwelling place of his people in all generations.

God is faithful to every generation. From one generation to another men put their trust in him. God is righteous. He is holy. He is strong. He is eternal. Man's life here on earth is brief, but he can trust in God who existed before the world was created and who will remain even after the sun, the moon, and the stars have passed away.

The span of man's life here is very short. God is our dwelling place and we can rest in him in life, in death, and throughout eternity.

* May the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you forevermore. Amen.

BAPTIST TRAINING UNION READINGS For Individual Devotions

- M.—The Widow's Mites. Luke 21:1-9
- T.—The Last Supper. Luke 22:3-23
- W.—In Gethsemane. Luke 22:35-46
- T.—Jesus Betrayed. Luke 22:21-23, 47-64
- F.—The Crucifixion. Luke 23:27-38
- S.—The Israelites in a Foreign Land. Gen. 47:1-12
- S.—The Resurrection. Luke 24:1-12



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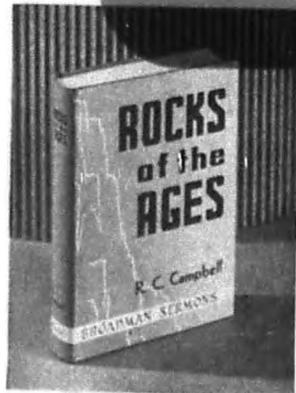
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